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A Qualitative Study Of Central New Jersey Home Schoolers As A Reform Movement

Veronica De Noia

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A Qualitative Study of Central New Jersey Home Schoolers as a Reform Movement

Veronica DeNoia

Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to establish a profile of home schoolers in Central New Jersey and to assess home schooling's function as a school reform model.

Methods and Procedures

Surveys were sent to 85 Central New Jersey Superintendents. The eight question survey asked Superintendents to identify benefits and drawbacks to home schooling. Additionally, Superintendents were asked to identify the components of school reform. A second survey was sent to 550 home schoolers. Among the questions asked were ones that related to reasons, benefits and drawbacks. A demographic study was also done. Further, observations/interviews were conducted with home schoolers from each county in Central New Jersey.

Results

Eighty-eight percent of the 49 superintendents who responded stated they had home schoolers within their district. Sixty seven percent of the superintendents said there was no communication for with the families. Forty six percent of the superintendents saw no benefit to home schooling with sixty seven percent believing that the greatest detriment was lack of socialization.

In the responses from home schoolers, 30% of the parents to home schooled due to dissatisfaction with public education. Half of the home schoolers employed an eclectic curriculum. Of the 59% who assess their children annually, 100% scored above the 80th percentile in reading and mathematics. The advantages of home schooling were diverse from intimacy with children (23%) to family harmony (11%). The disadvantages included lack of socialization (28%) and society's perception (20%). The demographics yielded the following: average age 40-50; generally female as primary teacher; 74% with either some college or a degree; combined income-over \$50,000 annually.

Conclusions/Recommendations

The research dispels the perception that lack of socialization is an issue for home schoolers. According to the indicators of school reform both identified by the surveyed superintendents and the CSRD (Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration) program, the components of home schooling fulfill those indicators in 90% of the areas.

The recommendations for further study included using home schools as labs for school improvement initiatives, investigating minority home schooling, and exploring the reasons for the high achievement in standardized scores.

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF CENTRAL NEW JERSEY HOME SCHOOLERS AS A
REFORM MOVEMENT

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University

2001

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Today, home schooling walks a fine line in the era of school reform." (Duffy, 1998, p.23)

In reflecting over the past fifty years and beyond, it appears that the history of education is characterized by "waves" of reform that run in ten-year cycles. It is further evident that these "waves" reflect worldwide changes in social, economic, political, and technological relationships (Knowles, 1988, p.6; Swanson, 1989), as much as they reflect a cognization that there is a better way to educate.

From the earliest reforms during the Progressive era of the 1900's to the post Sputnik push for an intensified math/science curriculum to the back to basics of the 60's to the cooperative learning of the 80's all these movements reflect the human need to change because of dissatisfaction with the status quo. Depending on the political climate, there is either movement toward more federal control or toward more state control. This has been an on-going struggle since 1776, and shows no sign of change. This battle for control permeates all areas of our life from economic issues to social issues to education issues. Particularly when there is something new and different that arrives on the scene. The tendency is to be immediately suspect.

In the midst of this is a slow-growing phenomenon: home schooling. Estimates of the number of children who are home schooled vary as greatly as the reasons parents choose to home school. Conservative estimates put the number at 120, 000 (Feinstein, 1986; Lines, 1987), while others estimate the number to be as high as a million (Holt, 1983; Moore, 1985). The 90's saw that number rise to 600,000 (Lines, 1996) which represented roughly 1% of all school aged children. Brian Ray (1997) from the Home School Legal Defense Association put the number at 1.23 million (more students than attend school in the entire state of New Jersey which ranks tenth in student population.)

The most recent figures presented by the United States Department of Education (2000) place the figure of students home schooled at 750,000 with a growth of 15% each year while Altieri (2000) estimates the figure to be one million. Romanowski (2001) exceeds all figures placing the number of home schoolers between 1.2 and 1.7.

As it relates to home schooling specifically, these cyclical waves or "sites of struggle" as Mayberry (1991) characterized them are more than a mere movement to exercise free choice options. Mayberry's research found that

...the decision to home school (or seek other forms of privatized education) [thus] represents a political response by people who are attempting to defend their 'way of life' which they perceived is threatened by the current organization and content of public education. (p.8)

In fact, the psyche of the home schooler appears to be skeptical of the status quo in general. According to Mayberry's (1991) research there is a general distrust of the

federal government, the military, labor, the media, and religious institutions. This would appear to be an incongruity based on what is known through the profile of home schoolers that they are conservative and home school predominately for religious reasons (Feinstein 1986; Holtrop, 1996). But upon closer inspection it is apparent that central to the issue of home schooling is the parental right to influence and direct their children's education. Those institutions have little capacity for non-mainstream influence. In respect to the religious aspect, it should be noted that it is the absence of religious ideals and values that concern parents about the milieu of public education. These ideals and values are certainly attainable outside the realm of organized religion.

Clearly not as radical, but meritorious nevertheless as a reason why it is so difficult to categorize home schooling is the guarded nature of the home school community. Archer (2000) found that home schoolers tend to be distrustful and hence reluctant to participate in research because of their fear of how the information will be used.

One of the major proponents of home schooling, the guru, and certainly the person with the greatest name recognition, was John Holt. Holt the author of *How Children Fail* (1964), *How Children Learn* (1968), and *Instead of Education* (1976), elevated the status of home schooling from a reactionary response to the state of education to a skeptically accepted choice at the very least, and a viable choice for alternative education at the most.

Lyman (1993) identifies Holt on the left and Moore on the right as giving impetus to the "Crossfire" that would resurrect the concept of home schooling.

Though not working with each other, their ideas were nevertheless compatible on the state of education and the remedy: home schooling. Both of these men began their campaign, albeit separately, against formal schooling in the sixties.

This is not to say that home schooling has been without its nay-sayers, and its challenges. Initially, the legal battles just to home school were many for at the very core of home schooling was its juxtaposition to the compulsory school laws. What made these challenges even more difficult was that states varied in their interpretation of parental rights as guaranteed under the 1st, 9th, and 14th amendment, and no federal case law existed to guide them. As of 1998, 29 states had laws which specifically allow home schooling; the remaining 21 states allow home schooling under their private school statutes.

Principally, districts sought to take home school parents to court; although reluctantly due to the high success rate that the parents enjoyed, and the bad press that the schools were experiencing (*Birst v. Sanstead*, North Dakota 1992; *People v. Bennett*, Michigan 1993). Subsequently, Lawton (1992) found the challenges were over substance, instructor, and outcomes, if a district chose to pursue the home schooling choice at all.

What is it that motivates a parent to home school? What is it that impels a parent to sacrifice so much for a principle? There are a number of reasons for a parent to home school. Most fall into the categories of religious, academic, sociological, or New Age. The unifying factor for all these groups is that the schools simply are not meeting the unique needs of their children.

One of the greatest paradoxes of the home schooling movement is that while the movement is synergetic, it is difficult to gain insight into the interworkings of home schoolers because many of the participants view outsiders as forces determined to undermine their efforts. This is so pronounced for some home schoolers, they choose to exist underground (Avner, 1989; Lines, 1991 and 1996).

Other questions that meet home schoolers are what do you do and how do you do. The what do you do is far more difficult to answer than the how do you do it question. Dependent on your philosophical bent children may learn mathematics in the kitchen, science on the farm, history at the museum, or anything and everything at the library or the computer. The curriculum of the home schooler defies generalization, though many of the pre-packaged services boast a large number of purchasers.

In the how do they do column, the research of Greene (1984), Lines (1985), and Ray (1989), shows without exception, that home schoolers are at the very least on equal footing with public school children, and in most cases surpass public school children particularly in mathematics and language. Furthermore, when home schooled children have returned to the public school system, they have had little trouble adjusting either academically or socially.

In its recent resurgence, two key factors loom large. One is the increasing incidents of school violence and the other factor is the introduction of the Internet into our lives. Golden (2000) reported that subsequent to the Columbine tragedy, homeschoolers in Colorado increased by 10%. Similar increases occurred in other

parts of the country. In New Jersey, where the estimate of home schoolers in that state was a modest 2000 in 1997 (New Jersey DOE), a report that number had at least doubled prompted the Department of Education (2000) to formally survey all public school districts in the State for additional demographic data.

In respect to the Internet, there exists in the year 2001 over one hundred home school related sites (Yahoo.com) that range from curriculum sources to cyber-instruction to chat rooms. The chat rooms which are open twenty-four hours a day have taken hundreds of thousands of hits over the past year. In terms of cyber-instruction, Pawlas (2001) found that this affords parents the opportunity to continue home schooling through the high school years when traditionally parents have contemplated reentry into the public school system due to their lack of expertise to deliver instruction in subjects such as foreign language and higher-level mathematics courses.

In New Jersey, as well as other states that are investigating pre-packaged Whole School Reform models such as Success for All and Accelerated Schools, the answers they are seeking may be inherent in the "Home School Model." Bennett (2001) former US Secretary of Education believes that home schooling is one of the "most robust, promising and courageous movements in modern-day America"(p. 4).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to establish a profile of home schoolers in Central New Jersey and to assess home schooling's function as a school reform model.

Statement of the Problem

While much research exists in respect to what is wrong in public schools (Comer, Ben-Avie, Haynes, & Joyner, 1999; Slavin, 2001) and the varying methodology to "make it better" (McChesney and Hertling, 2000), very little information exists on what the learner, the student, sees as the best way to learn. What makes the home schooling movement so unique, is that the parents take the lead from the child, and not the other way around that seems to be the *modus operandi* for public schools.

Research Questions

It is necessary to ask questions from both the perspective of the home schoolers and the public school to create a complete picture. In respect to home schoolers, questions such as:

1. What are the reasons New Jersey parents elect to home school?
2. What are the varying methodologies that are employed in teaching home schoolers in New Jersey?
3. What do home schoolers in New Jersey say about how they can best learn?
4. How is the issue of socialization addressed for the New Jersey home schoolers?
5. How is technology utilized in the home school environment?
6. How successful have New Jersey home schoolers been?
7. What can we learn from New Jersey home schoolers than can benefit public education?

From public school superintendents' information should be gathered that answers

Questions such as:

1. Does the district have a policy that governs home schooling?
2. Does the district communicate with home schoolers?
3. Are home schooled children allowed to participate in any public school classes or activities?
4. What do superintendents consider key elements in school reform movements?

Importance of the Study

While it is obvious that districts don't have to hit the panic button anticipating a mass exodus from public education and ponder the decision to close a school, the home school movement, simply by virtue of its existence is a phenomenon that must be reckoned with. While educators look under every manipulative and in every cooperative learning corner for answers to why Johnny can't read, write, or compute, the answer might be as simple as networking with those who choose to educate literally in their back yard.

Prior research concentrated on reasons for home schooling (Stevens, 1979; Van Galen, 1987), legal challenges to home schooling (Buchanan, 1987; McCarthy, 1991), and a profile of home schoolers (Gustavson, 1987; Wagenaar, 1997), but no one has sought to investigate the differences in learning, or the linkages that may exist; consequently, an unabridged picture of home schooling does not exist. If it is true that the whole is a sum of its parts, the home schoolers are an important part of

the educational improvement equation that has been ignored. It is critical to include all stakeholders in the quest for a highly literate citizenry.

Limitations/Delimitations

1. Sample size of home schoolers in Central New Jersey (580).
2. Sample size of Central New Jersey Superintendents (85).
3. Results will only reflect opinions of respondents making generalization to the entire population limited.
4. Utilizing a home school mailing list will preclude those who are underground

Definition of Terms

Home schooling- an educational program taught in the home by a student's parent or legal guardian. Standard academic subjects are taught in a systematic curriculum, or a curriculum developed by the parents.

State-v-Massa- Pivotal New Jersey Home School law (1967) establishing the right of parents to home school.

Wisconsin -v-Yoder- the 1972 Supreme Court decision that permitted the Amish to remove their children from public education after the 8th grade. This decision was based on a first amendment challenge. The Court ruled in favor of Yoder stating that their religious beliefs would be compromised if the child remained in school.

Whole School Reform-A system of corrective measures that address school issues such as poor performance, lack of parental involvement, and discipline.

Unschoolers-another name for home schoolers.

Organization of Study

The study will be organized employing triangulation in order to insure validity of the data collected. Surveys will be sent to central New Jersey homeschoolers and central New Jersey Superintendents. The list of Superintendents will be collected from the County Superintendent's offices and the home schoolers from the subscription lists of *Unschoolers News*, the newsletter of New Jersey Home Schoolers published out of Famingdale, New Jersey. Additionally, interviews and observations will be conducted with select home school families who have agreed to participate in the study.

Once the data was collected, information was extrapolated and conclusions drawn. From these conclusions, inferences were applied to public school reform and issues that would require further study.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is much debate concerning the advent of the home school movement. The purists would say that it is the original form of education. That long before even the one room school house, children were being educated at home though initially it was the role of the father, while today the role falls more likely upon the mother.

Pragmatists, on the other hand, while acknowledging, that home schooling has always existed in some fashion, would perhaps place the epiphany of the movement in the mid-sixties (Carper,1992). Extensive research in the field did not begin until the early 80's.

Researchers went in all different directions. Why do parents home school? Is there a certain type of family that home schools? Is it legal? How are home school children learning, and what are they learning? These are just some of the questions that early investigations looked at. More recently, researchers are looking into the use of technology in home schooling, the home schooler in college, and the bridge between home schoolers and the public education milieu. To get an understanding of this phenomenon, it is important to look at it all, and the impact it has on education as a whole.

Literature Reviews

It seems most fitting in this section to start with the work of Pitman (1986) who does just that-reviews the literature. She begins in the seventies with the educational generalists (Tyack, 1974 and Cremin, 1980), before she hones in on the specialists in home schooling (Lines, 1985, & 1986 and Zirkle, 1985). The review is standard, but what is different is the concentration she pursues on the impact of John Holt and Raymond Moore. Much of the literature is reviewed in respect to their divergent views. Holt with his progressive and academic home schoolers, and Moore with his fundamentalist home school followers. This perspective does prove valid in sectionalizing the research particularly early on in the movement. Further, as will be noted in the opening section on the origins and history of home schooling, there is a direct parallel between the movement, these two men, and the socio-political atmosphere of the onset on modern home schooling: the seventies.

A resume of home schooling is provided by Nelson (1986). What is note worthy in this presentation, is the considerable space he gives to the reasons for the opposition to home schooling by public school educators. There appears to be two primary issues: the loss of per pupil aid and the fact that the schools are not accredited. To a lesser extent, the issues of limited socialization, lack of supplementary supplies such as lab equipment, and inadequate skills on the part of parents as their children move into more complex subjects are also mentioned as problematic. Limited focus on the basics is also noted, but this appears to be a moot point based on the research of Duvall (1997) and others.

Lines (1987) much like Pitman (1986) provides a review, or overview as she names it, of home schooling. Her analysis is far more reader friendly than Pitman's (1986) though she has a prejudice in reporting also as she worked for the Department of Education. The dual concentration in this research is first to review the various curricula available to home schoolers and the strengths and weaknesses within; and second, to champion the cause of cooperation between home schoolers and school officials. Interspersed is the review of legislation, state studies, and a home schooler profile

Origins/History of Home Schooling

It is far easier to place a starting date on public education than it is to pin point the beginnings of home schooling. This is because from the beginning of time children were educated in no other way than at home: there were no formal schools. The only difference is that originally, fathers were the primary educators of children.

Even in the twentieth century, the origins of home schooling are arguably conjoined to when the researchers began to explore the phenomenon. This appears to be in the late 70's to early 90's, though certainly home schooling was operational prior to that time (Knowles, Marlow & Muchmore, 1992).

Rakestraw and Rakestraw (1990) traced the evolution, or more correctly the revolution that led to the burgeoning of home schooling. They target the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and America's reaction to it as the insemination of home schooling. The upheaval of the sixties gave further cause to ruminate on the dissatisfaction with

public education. During this period volumes of educational reform books were available to the public. From Neill's *Summerhill* (1961) to Silberman's (1970) *Crisis in the Classroom*, educators, philosophers, and sociologists were calling for the jettisoning of public education. This became the clarion call for parents who wished to home school.

Perhaps the work of Knowles, Marlow, and Muchmore (1992) presents the most accurate presentation of the onset of modern day home schooling as they provide linkages to the political and social events that directly effected its resurgence and growth. Additionally, they validate much of what Pitman (1986) uncovered in earlier research.

Notwithstanding the world and civil wars, the most turbulent decade in America was the 1960's. There were political assassinations, war protests, riots, and upheavals at the political conventions, and a seeming proliferation of psychedelic drugs and free love. A basic distrust for the government, and all that it stood for grew like a cancer. This distrust crescendoed in the early seventies with the resignation of both a president and a vice president.

Education did not escape the wellspring of distrust. Kozol (1967), Silberman (1970), and Holt, (1964, 1967, 1976) wrote of the declining state of public school. There was an uproar about what was being taught, who was teaching it, who was being taught, and how they were being taught. The criticisms were many, the solutions few. Through all of this, an attempt is made to make some sense out of this confusion by linking the political and social movements to the home school

movement in five distinct phases.

Knowles (1988) identifies the first phase as the contention phase. This phase was a direct result of the educational reformers who wrote about the decline in schools, the lack of parental input tolerated in schools, the decreasing funding available for educational improvements, and the overall decline in performance of students particularly in the areas of mathematics and science. At this point, the early seventies, home schooling became an option for the New Agers and the pedagogues. Though the growth wasn't overwhelming, it was significant (perhaps a half million).

Phase two, confrontation, blossomed during the late seventies and early eighties. In a knee jerk reaction to requests to home school, administrators sought to litigate rather than mediate. Administrators armed with the compulsory attendance laws and home school parents armed with the 1st, 9th, and 14th amendments, went to battle. With no federal case law, the states were left to varying interpretations. There were as many different decisions as states. While initially, the states prevailed, as the cases were taken to appeal, the tide turned in favor of the parents. By 1986, every state permitted home schooling either specifically or implied.

Cooperation characterized phase three, in the mid-eighties. School districts saw that the cost of litigation, and the bad press were not worth the fight. This was also during the height of the Regan/Bush conservatism when more parents were home schooling for religious reasons, and invoking the 1st amendment rights. Reflective of the prevailing mood of the country, districts sought to cooperate with home schoolers. Some via passivity, while others proactively employing home school

personnel to provide out reach activities.

Phase four, in the late eighties, saw a consolidation of the home school movement. This period was characterized by a wide networking movement facilitated by the computer and its Internet capabilities. Additionally, this period saw a plethora of home school how-to books, manuals, legal directories, newsletters, and personal success stories.

The final phase, compartmentalization, occurred during the early nineties. This phase is characterized by the chasm that has developed between the liberal home school followers of John Holt, and the more conservative home school followers of Raymond Moore. Reflective of the conservatism of the time, the followers of Moore who home school for religious reasons, and who tend to be conservative, are the dominant force in home schooling.

Carper (1992) provides a cursory look at the history of home schooling while averring that very little has been written on the subject. He traces the beginnings to the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries (perhaps the only movement in history to have beginnings spanning 250 years!). He believes that home schooling waned because people began to believe "that [formal] schooling offered status and opportunity for economic advancement" (p.255). Since many of the early schools were of the one room schoolhouse variety for most, parents did not believe that they were giving up that much. One of the factors that Carper (1992) attributes to the resurgence of home schooling is the proliferation of the self-employed, cottage industries, and technology based home workers. These

phenomenon have afforded those who found it necessary to leave the home and the role of primary care giver/educator, to return to the "cult of domesticity" that they believe is the only environment in which to raise and educate their children.

Prior research looks at the politics of the times as giving rise to home schooling. Dowling (2001) believes it was the school violence of the 90's that caused home schooling to go mainstream. As parents and students questioned the safety of the school more and more parents were inquiring and in fact making the decision to home school increasingly at the high school level (Gewertz, 2000; Plent, 2001).

A Profile of the Home Schooler

Though most of the early literature dealt with reasons, philosophy, characteristics, and origins, some researchers still attempt to replicate what has gone before. Interestingly, some of this research presents a clearer picture of those families who choose to home school. This is perhaps attributable to the growth of the movement, and the local support groups that exist in most states. As a group, rather than as individuals, home schoolers are becoming less reticent to take their case to the larger population.

Using John Holt's magazine *Growing Without Schools* subscription list, Gustavson (1988) sought to construct a profile of home schoolers. One hundred forty seven home school families responded to his survey yielding the following results. The average home school family has two children, and began to home school at the age of six, though many stated that they began at birth. The religious affiliation was

66% Protestant, 22% other including Catholics, Mormons, and Jehovah Witness. In home school families, 72% of the fathers are college graduates, while 59% of the mothers have degrees. The economic range was from 45% making \$15,000-\$30,000, 20% making \$30,000-\$45,000, and 22% making above \$45,000. As to curriculum, 20% of the parents taught only "real life" skills and applications, while 50% taught special knowledge skills such as woodworking in addition to the basics. Religious studies were infused into 16% of the home schoolers curriculum. The average length of study was five days a week, but for only about three hours a day. When asked to list the advantages and the disadvantages of home schooling, the following responses were garnered. Advantages included flexibility of the learning program, avoidance of negative peer influences, sound moral development, ability to progress at the child's learning speed, strengthen attention and independence. The disadvantages were few with 27% of the respondents listing none at all. Of these who did respond they listed the time commitment, social isolation and other people's reaction as negatives. Only 40% of the parents had their children tested. All of those tested scores above the national average.

While it is John Holt, and his body of work that is identified as the father of home schooling, the role of mother researcher clearly belongs to Patricia Lines who has been researching and reporting on home schooling for over 15 years. In her most recent findings, Lines (1996) places the number of children who are home schooled at about 1% of the total school population or approximately 600,000 children nationwide. Legally all 50 states now have laws permitting home schooling though

the parameters governing home schooling vary greatly from state to state. Whether home schooled children follow a Christian curriculum, a local curriculum, or an eclectic, parent created curriculum, the common denominator is that the learning environment is student led with a heavy dose of experiential learning. In a reassessment of past research, Lines finds the biggest change is in public attitude toward home schooling. Lines found that this change has opened the door for home schoolers to partner with public schools.

Far more radical is the notion reported by Hargreaves (1996) a Cambridge professor, that droves of parents will opt for home schooling as we move into the 21st century due to the influence of business and industry. Hargreaves attributes this boon to changes in perks offered by these concerns and the "social changes that will defeat comprehensive school supporters' attempts to create a more uniform state education system, " (p.11).

Less controversial is the study conducted by Wagenaar (1997) which provides a family profile: 66% earn over \$25,000 per year, 80% are white, 85 % of those home schooled are either only children or first born; 39% have a college or professional degree. This data replicates earlier findings of home school researchers.

Perhaps the most palatable of the recent research is the personal account of Holtrop (1996) a college professor who has chosen to home school his three children. He chooses to categorize his home schooling as "interest -initiated." His curriculum has a heavy emphasis and wide variety of reading with an infusion of whole language and literature-based units. In addition, he addresses the question of isolation that so

many opponents fear is the plight of the home schooler. His children attend a variety of activities with other home schoolers in addition to dance classes, choir rehearsal, swimming lessons, and art classes as do many other home school children. The picture presented by Professor Holtrop more closely approximates the one room schoolhouse than some educational anomaly.

In yet another personal publication, Metts (1996) a professor at Spring Arbor College in Michigan, presented a positive picture of the home schooling that his two children thrived in. Similar, to Holtrop (1996), his children participated in a variety of socialization activities: soccer, Little League baseball, and the cadet orchestra. But what Metts believed to be one of the greatest influences in the children's development was their "intergenerational social interactions rather than primarily age-segregated ones" (p.73). He believes, as do many other home school families that in addition to educating children, and insuring that they are socialized beings, they should also be compassionate and civilized, something that cannot occur in the public school system due to, among other things, sheer numbers.

The direction that the recent research is taking is far less adversarial. In Lopez and Shubert's (1997) review of the Mayberry et. al. *Home Schooling: Parents as Educators*, they evaluated this book not only in terms of home schooling, but also they value its implications for all education. Both the authors and the reviews find that there is much that can be learned from the home school experience that is directly applicable to the public school system. One area is curriculum where home schoolers have always been able to discern what is worth knowing. The findings of Taylor

(1997) and Harper and Everhart (1997) appear to corroborate this belief.

Possibly the most Orwellian perspective of home schooling and its future can be found in Hargreaves (1996) a Cambridge University professor who offers the following:

“Teachers were once needed in part because they knew more than the parents and what they knew was not readily available from an alternative source. Neither condition now applies for many homes. The technology gives easy access to all the information that the home-based student needs and parents are so much better educated that they know both what their children need and how to access it” (p. 19).

Reasons for Home Schooling

There are a number of reasons why parents choose to home school their children, though two in particular are mentioned repeatedly in the research: religious and overall poor quality of education.

Stevens (1979) found the parental reasons to home school fell into three distinct categories: religious, political, social. He shares a common thread that runs through all three that parents voice: a total disillusionment with public education practices. Many parents believe that schools stifle the innate curiosity a child is born with. Parents feel that they are able to expand the scope of learning of their children by making the world their classroom. This allows children to seek their own level of interest in a subject.

Adding to the religious factor for home schooling, Gustavsen (1988) named competitiveness in the classroom as another factor for some parents to remove their children from traditional schools. These parents, who believe that children progress at their own rate, do not want their children traumatized or stigmatized because they are not achieving at the same rate as other children.

Some of the earliest home school literature reflects religion as the sole reason for home schooling. Feinstein (1986) reports exclusively on this aspect. He cites numerous examples of parents who home school because they believe it is a religious charge from God. Not to honor this charge, would be to negate God's will. These parents cite bible passages, specifically from the Book of Deuteronomy to support their decision. Even after criticism is leveled against them concerning their qualifications, their response is that the Lord will provide them with the knowledge to teach because he has directed them to do so.

Shepherd (1986) confirms the findings of Feinstein (1986). Initially, religious reasons appeared to be the dominant reason for parents to opt to home school. While giving cursory attention to parental reasons to home school that were due to seeking an alternative approach, clearly the focus in his research is on the religious right, the fundamentalists, and their decision to home school as being God's work.

Van Galen (1987) found that in addition to the religious aspect, many parents felt home schooling enabled them to strengthen their family bond, and to meet the unique individual needs of their children. With so much time spent in transit to and from school not to mention in school, parents saw their input in their children's life

diminishing. They wanted to be the catalyst to instill values into their children, not a virtual group of strangers that had to choose some middle of the road belief system so as not to offend anyone.

In regard to the unique individual needs of children, Van Galen (1987) found that many parents were quite in tune with their child's learning style. They did not believe the public education system was structured to meet those needs. They felt that as parents, they could better structure a learning program in which their child could excel. Still other parents had special needs children, who they believed were falling through the cracks, some even being classified unnecessarily. By educating these children at home, work could be properly paced, and progress more closely monitored.

Pitman (1987) adds proponents of new age learning to those who choose to home school. This group comprises the smallest percentage of home schoolers, but perhaps the most interesting. This group, the renamed hippies of the sixties, believes that education should be tied to nature. They are devotees of an approach that infuses a respect for man, the land, and life skills.

Lines (1987) found no particularly dominant reason, but cited all of those previously mentioned reasons referring also to John Holt, the guru of home schooling who felt children learned best in what might be coined the least restrictive environment. Many parents believe that public schools are the most restrictive environment that stifles rather than proliferates creativity and curiosity in learning.

Rather than reasons, Audain (1987) uses the phrase imperatives that she identifies

as being motivators for parents to home school. These imperatives are the negative exit impulse, and the positive entry impulse. The negative exit impulse is based on the parents' perception that they are not valued in the public school educational decision making process. This is coupled with concerns about disciplinary procedures, strikes, and ill-prepared teachers. The positive entry impulse is based on the premise that the parent is the primary teacher, and that no one could possibly meet the individual needs of the child better than the person who knows the child best—the parent.

Using the 1987 directory from John Holt's home school magazine *Growing Without Schools*, Gustavson (1988) surveyed 147 home school parents to ascertain the reasons for home schooling. His research uncovered four reasons: belief that home schooling is better; a better moral atmosphere; a better social atmosphere; and the belief that five was too young for children to be taken from home for school. It must be noted that religious reasons ranked very low. That can be attributed to the fact that followers of Holt tend to be academics and New Agers, as opposed to the followers of Moore, who tend to be religious.

Klicka's (1988) research reaffirms Stevens (1979), Feinstein (1986), and Shepherd (1986). His analysis views the movement as "representing a desire of parents to restore Christian values to educate, and to unify the family" (p.88).

Other than what they acknowledge as the most common reason: religious beliefs, Konnert and Wendel (1988) provide additional reasons for parents to home school: low academic standards, drugs, alcohol, and vandalism. Their research suggests that

"some families opt for home schooling because they refuse to subject their children to forced busing for the purpose of achieving racial integration within the school system "(p.43). It is important to note here that while that information is not outside the realm of possibility, there exists no other validation of that reason in the research, nor do the authors provide any supportive documentation.

Further validating the above-mentioned research was Avner (1989) who also found that the concern for the absence of religious values, and overall quality of the delivery of education were the primary reasons that parents home schooled. What makes this collection of corroborating research more germane, is that it represents all parts of the country, lending itself to the generalization that all home school parents, regardless of the region are of a similar mind.

In an attempt to bring some organization to the field of reasons for home schooling, Van Galen (1988) found that common threads that ran through the reasons allowed her to categorize home schoolers into two factions: ideologues and pedagogues. Ideologues object to what is being taught, have a religious bent, and tend to be conservative. Morals motivated, their home schools approximate traditional schools with such items as workbooks, chalkboards, and desks. In many cases a pre-packaged curriculum is utilized from a Christian curriculum company. The pedagogues fall into a more unstructured educational environment. The learning is experiential, and based on the child's learning style. More variety is employed, as is interdisciplinary learning as opposed to the subject independent learning that is used by the ideologues.

Using a far more psychological approach, Knowles (1988a) evaluated parental reasons for home schooling in light of the parents' personal history creating a Biography Impact Model. He discovered that parents in his "test group" fell into three categories. First, there are parents who home school because of a desire to maintain close ties with their children. Many of these parents came from homes where there was "parental neglect and disinterest, parental substance abuse, or parental maladjustment" (p. 73).

The second group of parents who home schooled for academic reasons, usually had deleterious school experiences.

Group three where parents who home schooled because of the social environment in public education. They had experienced an amoral atmosphere in schools and believed that it was symptomatic of society as a whole and that their children were safer at home.

The last group had children who were either academically superior, or who had learning problems. These parents believe that schools have the tendency to "teach to the middle" so that their child's unique needs would not be met.

Knowles believed that on the face of it parents may give a variety of reasons why they home schooled, but underneath, there were strictly personal history reasons for the decision to home school.

Mayberry (1989a) punctuates her home school research with commentary by home school parents. This method, more than the general reporting of research, helps to underscore the passion that is behind much of what home schoolers do and

why they do it.

As much as Van Galen (1988) sought to compartmentalize the reasons for home schooling into ideologues and pedagogues, Mayberry's work expands those classifications for clarity. The ideologues, religious and New Age families are motivated to home school in order to protect their children. The irony is that religiously motivated parents want to protect their children from the influences of secularism, while the New Agers want to home school their children to protect them from the predilection of public school to foster dependence. They believe that the child is the ultimate power, and the human spirit is the tantamount authority, not God.

The pedagogues, those who home school for socio-related and academic reasons possess similar motivators. Both believe in perpetuating family unity, and in a desire to quell the advent of peer pressure. The additional impetus for academics is the one on one instruction they are able to provide that is both self-paced and learning style dictated.

While most researchers give parental reasons to home school as general information, Mayberry (1989) quantified her data. Mayberry found that 65% of the parents who home schooled did so for religious reasons, while 33% of the parents who home schooled did so because they lack confidence in the public school system to provide a quality education for their children. It is interesting to note that the 33% encompasses a wide variety of dissatisfaction, most of which has been previously noted in reviewed research.

Anderson (1991) expanded upon the prior research of Avner (1989) when he addressed the reason that parents home schooled focusing on the individual needs of the children. Anderson provides ample research data on parents who home school because they felt that their child's progress was being retarded in the public school system. All the examples centered on reading development and foreign language acquisition. Many parents were angered that provisions are not normally made for children who come to school reading. The children become stagnate waiting until the other children catch up. Many parents said they got tired of fighting the system to get not only what their children needed, but what they deserved. Many times they were treated with condescending attitudes that suggested they were incompetent. Rather than to continue the battle, while their child suffered, they removed them from school and taught them at home.

Among the reasons that Pike (1992) gives for home schooling, lack of discipline, lack of direction, and discrimination, the last one is most unique, and highly controversial. Pike reports that of his nine children, the oldest two who were white, went through the public school system "well served." Their teachers had high expectations for them and when they began to lag in their studies, or behaved inappropriately, the home was called immediately. Unfortunately, Pike found that when his remaining seven adopted children entered the school system, the expectations were not the same. The children, black, Hispanic, East Indian, and Cambodian, were held to lower standards because Pike believed that the teachers did not expect them to "measure up." In order to save them from mediocrity, Pike took

them out of the public school and educated them at home where they flourished.

Nationwide Studies

Home schooling is not a regionalized concept; it exists in varying fashions in all 50 states. While the majority of the research has been done on the movement in general, some researchers have concentrated on the impact of home schooling in select states.

The most comprehensive document to date has been the work of Greene (1984). In the 117-page document, a detailed profile of the 88 respondents is presented. Capsulized results show an Alaskan home school population that comes from all areas of the state: rural, isolated, and urban. The mother, with an average educational level of 12th grade or above, is the primary teacher. Predominant reasons for home schooling were religious reasons, and an increased opportunity to learn life skills. Additionally, students were taught using a variety of modalities, and sufficient time was allocated in the day for socialization.

A questionnaire was used by Greene (1984) to gather this data producing the following additional descriptors. Utilizing the California Achievement Test (CAT) home-schooled students scored significantly higher than the national average in verbal skills, and one third of a standard deviation higher than the norm in mathematics. An interesting finding is that the longer the child remains in the home school environment, the better the performance on the standardized test.

Additionally, what makes this home schooling experience unique, is that public

schoolteachers are used not only to write lesson plans, but also to correct and grade work sent via the mail. Because of this interaction, schools can count these students on their enrollment, thereby collecting state and federal funding for them. Ironically, while the average per pupil cost in Alaska was \$4277, the average per pupil cost for home schoolers is \$2487. Data from the study also showed that 69% of the students expressed a desire to remain in the home school environment, as they saw numerous advantages, and few disadvantages to home schooling.

Lindley (1985) investigated home schooling in the state of Indiana. What makes his study unusual is that he conducted it from the perspective of public school superintendents. Lindley found that the home school population in Indiana grew 65% from 1982-1985. Due to this dramatic increase, superintendents believed that more stringent parameters needed to be in place. Superintendents believed not only that home schoolers should register with the State Department of Education, but also that hours of attendance, curriculum employed, and progress should be reported annually.

In 1987, Kutter looked at the home school movement in Kentucky. Results were garnered by utilizing a three page questionnaire which was returned by 32 central Kentuckians. This represented 60% of the queries sent.

The researcher found that 73% of those responding made the decision to home school based on religious reasons, while another 27% did so because they were dissatisfied with the quality of education available in the public schools. The basis for the home school curriculum centered around reading and mathematics with infrequent visits to the library, but numerous field trips. There were also provisions

made for socialization.

Kutter (1987) does suggest the need for further research. Areas requiring investigation include depth of study and learning, socialization, and diversity of learning.

The research of Mayberry (1988) spanned an entire year. This survey provided an overview of home schooling in the state of Oregon with a specific focus on comparing attitudes between home schoolers and the larger population. The instrument used to collect the data was a 154 variable questionnaire responded to by 435 families. Additionally, 4% of these families were interviewed.

The comparative study yielded the following results. Home schoolers surpassed the general population by 21% for those who finished college. Conversely, only 6% of home schoolers did not finish high school, while the figure in the general population was 29%. Predictably, this increased level of education resulted in an elevated socio-economic status for home schoolers.

Church attendance (73%) is high among home schoolers in Oregon. This is an increase of 44% over the general population. Politically, 57% are conservative republicans, a 33% difference from the public in general.

Specific to home schoolers in Oregon, Mayberry (1988) found that there were three reasons why parents choose to home school: religious beliefs, concern for academic success, and the negative social environment they believed existed in public schools. There is a smaller group, called New Agers, who chose to home school because they felt that a more free form approach to education was needed to fully

develop their child's academic potential.

This research shows deviation even among home schoolers. For example those who home school for religious reasons have less formal schooling, but higher income levels than New Agers. Further, while those who home school for religious reasons tend to be republicans, New Agers are more likely to be independents or democrats. The common link for all Oregon home schoolers is "their lack of confidence in all types of contemporary social institutions"(p. 7.) That appears to be what keeps them in the home school environment once they start.

The Washington Home School Project reflects the research of Wartes (1988).

Once again a questionnaire was utilized to gather data. The number replying was 219. From that number, the following profile of home schoolers in the state of Washington was constructed. The family is intact, with two children, and a median income of \$25,000. Most families have an above average level of education (12th grade or above) with the mother serving in the role of teacher. Students spend approximately 13 hours per week in a structured learning environment. Most parents are involved in home schooling support groups. The dominant reasons for home schooling were religious reasons and philosophical academic differences. Issues of peer pressure, greater parent-child contact, and enhanced self-esteem were other reasons parents gave for electing to home school.

Van Galen's study (1988b) of home schoolers in "a state in the Southeast" was a qualitative study of 16 families. Though citing the dominant reason for home schooling most often identified by the parents (dissatisfaction with the public school

response to their children's needs), the study focuses more on parental experiences than a standard profile. Many of the parents, once having made the decision to home school, began the process rather quickly, with little or no knowledge of the process. Further while the opportunity to network with other home school parents was provided through state associations of home schoolers, many times questions went either unanswered or were nebulously answered out of respect for the "independence and family autonomy of the home schoolers" (p. 103). Consequently, what many of these home schoolers did initially was to either educate in the fashion of traditional schools, or rely on home school correspondence courses. Eventually, parents moved away from this reliance, and onto their own methodology.

What makes this study different from most, is that it includes assessment results. Utilizing the Stanford Achievement Test, scores for home schoolers over a two year period stayed in the 65-68th percentile range. Scores were highest in the science and listening skills area, with the lowest scores in spelling and math computation. Other interesting results included no measurable correlation between the level of parents education beyond the 12th grade and student success, and the effect of teacher contact. It appears that student performance is not enhanced with contact from the public school. Wartes' (1988) concluding view of home schooling is that it is "an indication of a growing market for viable educational options" (p. 50).

McGraw, Bergen, and Schumm (1993) presented findings of research they conducted in Kansas. While the sample number was small (30), the authors were able to formulate a profile. Home schoolers in Kansas have an average of three children,

and come from intact families of the mid to upper socio-economic range. The main reasons for home schooling were religious beliefs, fear of negative educational experiences, and the caliber of peer interaction. Parents were able to combat the reoccurring issue of lack of socialization, by enrolling their children in art, music, and gymnastic classes. Mothers were the teachers with father offering ancillary support in certain areas. The researchers suggest that due to the small sample size additional research is needed specifically in the areas of contact time, number of subjects taken, and levels of support outside the family to home schoolers.

A number of nationwide studies were presented in this section. Greene (1984) who profiled Alaskan home schoolers and found that religious reasons were the primary motives for parents to choose to home school. Lindley (1985) researching the home schoolers in Indiana looked at the movement through the eyes of superintendents who believed that stricter controls over home schooling were needed. Kentucky home schooling was research by Kutter (1987) who found religion to be the dominant reason to home school, but also uncovered curricula that centered almost exclusively around reading and mathematics. Mayberry (1988) conducted an attitudinal study of home schoolers in Oregon. What she discovered in that state was that home schoolers were better educated, more conservative and bigger church goers than the general population. Wartes (1988) in the *Washington Project* reflected findings that identified religious reasons as the dominant reason for home schooling and a population of home schoolers who possessed an above average level of education. Van Galen (1988b) found that the home schoolers in "a state in the

Southeast" homeschooled because they were dissatisfied with traditional public education. Finally, in McGraw et.al. (1993), home schoolers in Kansas were from the mid to upper socio-economic range and had on average three children with the mother being the primary educator.

Technology and the Home School Movement

It is within the context of what Doyle (1992) perceives as a current crisis in education that he discusses the role of technology and how it does and will impact home schooling. In fact, he goes so far as to predict that "to imagine the school of the future as a state of mind, and a set of activities, rather than a structure of brick and mortar," (p.23) is not outside the realm of possibility. Further he believes that the current technology affords families the opportunity not only to educate at home, but also to perpetuate income.

Bruder (1993) broke down the impact of technology on home schooling to a language even opponents can understand: money. Not only can home schoolers benefit from the advances provided by interactive learning, but schools could benefit from counting students on the rolls for funding if they are providing "home learning" for this population in a similar fashion to what is provided to students on home instruction in some areas of country. This allows parents to teach their children in the areas they are most comfortable with, and to tap into the schools for more advanced courses, or specialty courses for which they have no training or experience. At the same time, they can control the environment in which the child is learning.

Computers are serving a dual purpose for home school families. First, the Internet is a source for parents to network. There are web pages, message boards, and sources for retrieving curricula. Second, home schooled students utilize the computer for research, and for software that augments learning activities. Abramson (1995) found that in home schooled families, 67% had computers in contrast to 33% of the families who do not home school. Pawlas (2001) found that while those same statistics still hold true, home school parents are now utilizing their home computers for their children to take on line courses through accredited cyber schools particularly at the high school level for courses they are ill equipped to teach. Additionally, many home schooled students spend as much as two hours a day on the computer accessing information, and utilizing CD-Roms in a tutorial mode.

That is not to say that all home schoolers embrace the use of computers. Some home school parents feel that it defeats the purpose of the individualization and the one on one relationship that home schooling engenders (Abramson, 1995).

Kenny (1997) concurs with Abramson's findings. He sees the potential for the Internet to accelerate the number of home schoolers who can not only turn to the "net" to provide alternate learning experiences, but also beget a population of workers "who can work at their own pace with their own discipline," (p.18) rather than stagnate in a nine to five job.

Further, the computer can be used to supplement educational programs that parents are incapable of providing, such as foreign languages. It also addresses one of the greatest criticisms of home schooling: the socialization factor, by affording

home schoolers the opportunity to develop state, country, and international pen pals via e-mail.

Bookmobiles offer yet another utilization of technology for the home schooler. Lockwood (1996) found that parents enlisted the on line card catalog services in addition to faxes for inter-library loans. An added bonus of the 1200 US bookmobile visits per year is that it served as a community gathering place thereby addressing the issue of socialization for home schoolers. The other advantage over public/private school libraries is the "personalized service and the close rapport with patrons which are trademarks of the bookmobiles" (p. 23).

Javid (1998) discusses the many distance learning opportunities for home schoolers that have addressed some of the concerns parents have encountered as their children move toward more complex subject matter in what traditionally would be their high school years. More and more colleges and universities are establishing sites for home schoolers along with the advent of cyber schools springing up in many states. In addition to the on line courses, students are assigned to a "teacher" who monitors their progress and corresponds via e-mail.

The role of technology in home schooling was discussed in this section. Doyle (1992) predicted the impact to be significant while Bruder (1993) translated its impact into dollars and cents for districts with home schoolers. Abramson (1995) and Pawlas (2001) found that the majority of home schoolers have computers and utilize them as a important teaching tool. The Internet, (Kenny, 1997) is seen as a tool that has the potential to accelerate the number of home schoolers.

Home School/Public School Linkages

The research in this area takes a variety of forms. Perhaps the one area given the most "press" is the home schoolers' request to participate in extra curricular activities: usually sports. While New Jersey possesses no definitive law on the subject, basically leaving it in the hands of the local school Boards, other states have laws which were precipitated by home schoolers' legal action.

In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the superintendent sought to forge linkages by providing parental workshops where parents could have their curriculum and law questions answered. Ramsey (1992) reports that this cooperation is more the exception, than the rule where many districts regard the decision to home school as tantamount to child neglect. The concept of "dual enrollment" has also taken hold in Iowa. This allows the home schoolers to register for the courses that they would not otherwise have at home, while at the same time the districts receive funding. This precludes one of the biggest objections to parents removing their children from public schooling to home schooling: loss of per pupil aid.

In Indiana, the dispute came down to a due process and equal rights protection issue. The discussion in the courts focused around the participation in extra curricular activities, particularly sports, as a debate on whether it was a right or a privilege. Due to some concessions made on the part of the home schooler, participation was granted. The home schooler in Massachusetts was not as lucky. In *Davis -v- Massachusetts Athletic Association* (1985) the court determined that participation was not a right, and participation was denied. In *Boyd -v- the Board of Directors*

{Arkansas} (1985) the petition to participate was viewed as a property interest because a scholarship was involved; hence, it was covered under the 14th amendment to the Constitution. What concerns Webb (1997) in his review of these cases is that there needs to be a "rational basis standard" (p. 132) for determination nationwide.

Zirkle (1997) researched parental requests for extra curricular involvement that did not deal with sports. He found that seven states: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Oregon, and Washington, had specific home school statutes that permitted home schoolers to participate in extra curricular activities. Unfortunately, there were other cases where students were denied permission to take classes. In Oklahoma specifically, the District Federal Court determined that parents could not pick and choose the classes they wanted for their children while home schooling. On closer inspection these cases appear to be more a question of dollars and cents. Most districts do not get funding for part-time students, so districts are hesitant to dilute their resources for home schoolers.

Adding credence to the idea that cooperative efforts with home school families are at least partially rooted in economics is the program that operates out of the Des Moines, Iowa Public School System. Leslie Dahm (1996), the Coordinator of Home School Instruction states that the school derives multiple benefits from working with home school parents: increased enrollment (which implies increased funding), and a measure of control over the education of the home schoolers progress. Teacher liaisons visit the homes of the home schoolers for support and assessment, and also

plan extra curricular activities such as drama, and field trip experiences. With this type of coordination Dahm (1996), feels that both the parents and the school are achieving the best possible education for the children involved.

But the controversy continues beyond the monetary aspects. Williams (1997) presents a point/counterpoint discussion. Williams believes that the benefits to participation: aesthetic sensitivity, mental focus, and discipline, far outweigh the logistics of having home schoolers participate. The counterpoint defers to the original reason that most home school parents decide to educate their children at home: they are dissatisfied with the public school system. If that is the case Guenzler (1997) believes that the home schooler's participation is a contradiction in terms, and should not be permitted, particularly if a full time public school student might be displaced.

In an interesting piece of research, Harper and Everhart (1996) see the link between the education community and home schoolers as an opportunity to provide student teaching opportunities for physical education majors. Two programs, Asbury College in Kentucky and Appalachian State University in North Carolina have developed home school physical education programs that are serviced by college undergrads. Under the supervision of college professors and the home school parents, the student teachers meet with the students once a week for 50 minutes. Groups are organized according to age, and appropriate skills are taught. This gives the students the opportunity to develop life skills and to socialize, while at the same time the college students develop teaching skills in a small controlled atmosphere.

Interestingly, the issue of physical education for home schoolers is one that evokes debate similar to the question of extra curricular participation. Because the requirements for physical education vary from state to state, Bennet (1997) editor of the *Journal for Physical Education, Dance, and Recreation* posed the following discussion question for his readership: Should physical education be required for home schooled children? As might be expected, the overwhelming response was yes, with a number of salient suggestions: video records of skills attained, activity journals, reading about athletes and careers in health. But perhaps the strongest case for physical education for home schoolers is the following quote from one of the respondents "someone who 'knows things' but cannot 'do things' is mentally literate, but kinesthetically illiterate" (p.10).

The linkages between home school and public school were reported in this section. Ramsey (1992) found that the linkages forged in Iowa were the exception rather than the rule. For the most part there is either no relationship or there is an adversarial one Zirkle (1997).

Academic Achievement and the Home Schooler

This is the area in which the least research exists. There are a number of reasons for this from the reluctance of home school parents to subject their children to standard measuring instruments, to the more sophisticated research perspective of control groups and allowing for variables.

At the time that Frost (1988) reported on the Illinois study of home schoolers

performance, there had only been three major assessment studies conducted: two by home school organizations, and one by an independent source. Frost's research was conducted on 74 home school families utilizing the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The uniqueness of this testing was that comparisons were made in three distinct areas: home schoolers to the general population, home schoolers to private school students, home schoolers to students in high socio-economic areas. These distinctions were made to counteract previous criticisms that home schoolers were compared to a general population that reflected disadvantaged students, and low socio-economic groups that could skew the results in favor of home schoolers. In all three comparisons, the home schoolers did at least as well as the other groups. In fact with the exception of the private school group comparison, they did as well, or better. The lowest scoring for home schoolers was in the mathematics area which the author attributes to the lack of drill in home schooling where the parents were "largely against what they saw as busy work" (p.116).

The work of Duvall et al (1997) really broke through the barriers of assessment. These researchers looked at the mastery of basic skills by home schoolers with disabilities. The results showed that the home schooled students scored significantly higher than their public school counterparts. This was attributed in no small part to the one on one attention that the students received as opposed to the 1:9 ratio that exists in most public school settings. Another factor was the parents' ability to structure learning situations to meet the individual needs of the disabled student. These findings replicate other findings, albeit few that home schoolers do, on

average, better than their public school counterparts.

In dramatic contrast, Boothe et al.(1997) surveyed 1000 administrators nationwide on their knowledge of home schoolers in their district. While 57% of the respondents said that their districts had shown an increase in home schoolers over the past five years, 55% thought that home schoolers did not meet the necessary academic standards for success though they admitted that they had not seen any results to affirm that. Further, the administrators surveyed had little knowledge of the home schoolers in their district, nor were they aware of their district's policy in regard to home schoolers.

Finally, though the sample was small, Taylor (1997) found that the three families that she conducted a qualitative study on performed exceedingly high when tested: between the 80th-90th percentile.

The academic achievement of home schoolers is in the above average range. This has been substantiated by the research of Frost (1988), Duvall et al (1997), and Boothe et al. (1997).

College and the Home Schooler

As the formal research of home schoolers evolved, it was a natural progression that investigators would look into the home schooler and the post high school experience. While little research has been done, it is an area that will prove more meritorious of research as the burgeoning home school population moves through its elementary, middle school, and high school years.

While home school advocates have pointed to a number of successful post-secondary experiences, Chapline's (1983) report on the Colfax family would make even the staunchest skeptic gives pause. The Colfax family, home schooling in California, have four sons. Home schooled all their lives, when it came time to pursue an educational career after high school, the boys decided they wanted to attend a traditional college. Applying to a number of Ivy League schools, all four applied and were accepted into Harvard. While this certainly speaks to the preparedness of the Colfaxes, it must be noted that under any circumstance, this is the exception, not the rule.

The home school population was the first to recognize the need to provide post high school experiences and addressed it, though tremendous controversy exists concerning the proposal. Geraghty (1997) reports on the plans by Michael Ferris, President of the Home School Legal Defense Association to open a two-year college in Virginia solely for home schoolers. The irony is that those opposed to the school, cite the need for students to partake in the socialization that is so much a part of four year academic institutions. This is the same criticism lodged by those who oppose home schooling at any level: the lack of socialization. The project has a rough road ahead of it not withstanding internal objections. There are 27 standards for accreditation that must be met; half of which must be in place to open, and the remainder in place within two years.

For those home schoolers who are anticipating admissions into traditional four year institutions, other problems loom, though legal challenges are being pursued.

Tarricone (1997) reports that both Georgia and Georgia Tech have different, higher standards for home schoolers seeking admission than traditionally schooled students. The North Carolina State legislature passed a law stating that home schoolers could not be treated differently when applying for admission only after the state colleges were legally challenged. It remains to be seen what other state colleges and universities will do as home schoolers apply for admission in their states.

It appears that colleges are becoming more receptive to home schooled students. Winters (2000) reported that Stanford accepted 26 of the 35 home schoolers who applied for Fall 2000 admission. That is an acceptance rate of 74%. Further, Lines (2000) found that colleges such as Harvard, Howard, and the University of Texas were receptive to the application of home schoolers to their institutions as they felt they brought diversity to the school.

College acceptance and subsequent success offers no problems to the home schooler. From Chapline's (1983) report on an entire family's acceptance and success in Harvard to Geraghty's (1997) details on the plans of the Home School Legal Defense League's plans to open their own college for home schoolers, post graduate work seems a natural progression.

Outcomes of Home Schooling

One of the issues that has surrounded the concept of home schooling from the outset is the assessment question. Many states required annual assessments on home schoolers to determine that students were being properly educated. In states where

testing is not a requirement, some home school parents have their children tested privately just to see how they are measuring up.

Falle (1986) sought to replicate the research of Greene (1984) in the area of assessment. Falle, using the CAT (California Achievement Test) tested home schoolers in the state of Alaska. The test group were fourth and eighth graders who were home schooled for at least a year. In a comparison to non home schooled students in the state, the fourth grade home schoolers scored higher in reading (84%-68%) and in math (83%-72%). The same results were achieved by the eighth grade students: reading 86% versus 74% by the non-home school population, and in math 84% versus 72%.

Utilizing yet another instrument, the SRA (Scientific Research Associates) achievement test, the same results were garnered: home schoolers scored at least as well if not better than the general population in mathematics and reading.

Ray (1988) aggregated the home school assessment information to that date. In all cases home schoolers proved to be at the very least on average with the general population in both cognitive and affective evaluations. More to the point of this research, was Ray's explanation of why these results do not necessarily indicate that home schooling is better than traditional schooling or that home schoolers are more intelligent. Ray believes that there are a number of reasons for the positive test results of the home schoolers: high parental involvement has been known to be a factor in student achievement, and certainly that is relevant for home schoolers; the tutoring mode of home schoolers is akin to the general population small class size

impacting test scores; most home schoolers are white, middle class children and that is what standardized tests have always been normed on, yet in the general population there is diversity among the test takers. Ray suggests that in order to get a more valid assessment of how effective home schooling is, researchers should assess parental goals for their children and how, and if they were met.

Home school parents encounter a number of problems when they attempt to test their children at home, simply in obtaining materials. Mueller and Brunetti (1989) found that while criteria for sale vary from publisher to publisher, most do not sell to individuals. Purchase requires school letterhead, bulk sales, and certificated individuals to administer and safeguard the tests.

Webb (1989) conducted a six-year study that looked at home schoolers' ability to attain success in post secondary education, and the job market. Following 20 families, Webb was able to determine the following: four students entered college and were not only successful, but met no adverse reaction due to the fact that they were home schooled; additionally, these students experienced no difficulty fitting in with the other students. Of the four students who pursued vocational courses, two met with success, while two were unsuccessful. This is attributed to the fact that these two youths really did not have as firm a dedication to a vocational interest as the other two had. Of the 12 remaining who sought employment, all achieved a moderate to very successful levels of achievement. Most employers were not put off by the fact that there was not an actual diploma to be produced, and focused more on the personal qualities that came through during the interview process.

What this researcher suggests, and it is certainly worth noting, is that since the research on home schooling was relatively new (the 80's), it is too soon to really formulate an evaluation on post home school success. Perhaps the next ten years will offer more concrete evidence of how home schoolers fair. Additional mention is made that as this further research continues, it would be interesting to note how many home schoolers start their own businesses. Webb (1989) believes that this is a distinct possibility, as it is very much in line with the characteristics of independence and self-actualization that home schooling engenders.

The critical thinking skills of home schoolers were experimentally assessed by Ray (1989). Thirty students participated in his research. Roughly two-thirds were home schoolers and the remaining third were general education students. The children ranged in age from 6 to 11. Students were given Piagetian tasks in both a pre and post test setting. Between the pre and posttest, the students received instruction. The results showed that home school children develop critical thinking skills at an earlier age and more rapidly than in the general population. The author attributes this to the fact that the parents "gave their children the right kinds of experiences to foster intellectual development" (p.6). This research validates previously cited findings that home schoolers perform as well, if not better than their public school counterparts.

Golden (2000) reports that home schoolers achieve higher than the average on both the ACT and SAT and their sub tests. Further, once they are in college, they maintain higher than average GPA's as freshmen. Some college admissions

counselors attribute that to the belief that home schoolers come to college imbued with a responsibility for their learning conjoined with motivation and curiosity.

Using traditional standardized tests, the outcome of home schooling continues to be noteworthy. Falle (1986) found that the Alaskan home schoolers scored higher than non home schoolers in both math and reading in the fourth and eighth grade. Ray (1988) found home schoolers to be at least on average with non-home schoolers attributing the success to parental involvement. In addition to standardized test results, Webb (1989) found that home schoolers were successful in the job market also. Considerable success has also been achieved by home schoolers in college admittance tests (Golden, 2000).

What Can We Learn From Home Schoolers?

Many times when public educational systems are anticipating the implementation of new programs, they will pilot the program in preceding years. Sometimes the cost is minimal, other times not. Because of the time factor and the cost, no matter how minimal, school districts are limited in the number of programs they can pilot. Further, in the situations where they cannot pilot the program, they are forced to make decisions on new programs solely through visiting other districts that have already implemented the program. It is questionable how educationally sound that method might be when the purchasing of new texts and their accompanying programs can cost upward of \$100,000. Many home school researchers (Knowles, 1988a) believe that among other things, home schooling could provide a "lab setting" for testing

programs if there was more cooperation between the home and school.

Lines (1987) found through her research a number of ways that public education could benefit from an improved relationship with home schoolers. Since the once problem of socialization for home schoolers has been put to rest, research could be conducted on the effect of different contacts with adults. This has proven to be a positive relationship in the development of the home school; public education could determine how it could be utilized to enhance the educational environment of general education students. Another area worthy of study would be the benefits of child directed versus teacher directed learning. The peremptory achievement of home schooled children has been well documented Greene, (1984); Webb, (1989); Duvall et al (1997); Taylor, (1997). What would benefit public education would be to see how these methodologies could be adapted in a larger setting. Three other areas of home schooling that could be beneficial to school districts are knowledge of the comparative effects of one-to-one-v-larger student/teacher ratios; the effects of peer pressure; and the relative efficiency of untrained parents-v-trained, certified teacher.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing studies as it relates to home schooling was conducted by Van Galen (1988a). The study attempted to compare and contrast criticism of public education by professionals and home schoolers. Further, this investigation looked in to the pedagogy employed by home school parents and its applicability to improving public schools in general.

One concurring view between the groups is that the education or miseducation that a child receives early on in school, carries throughout the child's school career. In the

event that it has been a negative experience, it can be detrimental to the academic growth of the child regardless of the intervention. Home schoolers believe that their techniques remove all of that potential devastation.

Home school parents teach to the child's learning style rather than to the central tendency of the group. It is ironic to note that public educators receive in service education on learning styles, but do little to implement what they have learned. Perhaps children should be grouped according to learning styles rather than homogeneously or heterogeneously.

In an issue of *Education and Urban Society* devoted almost entirely to home schooling, Knowles (1988a) found that the information uncovered on home schooling is equally as beneficial to the non-home schooler as the home schooler. So much can be learned from the almost lab like atmosphere of the home school. In fact he believes that the home school "provides an environment in which activities on the 'cutting edge' of education can be implemented, discarded, or improved upon" (p.12).

Sheffer (1989) points out a number of practices that home scholars utilize that have either been attempted in the public schools, or could be. For example, much of the day for home schoolers is spent reading. School systems have pursued the ideal of sustained silent reading or the more ambitious DEAR (drop everything and read). Depending on the commitment to the program, these efforts have been successful.

Further still, in multi-sibling families, peer teaching is employed. Schools have recently been funded via grants for peer tutoring programs that have proved immensely successful. Other efforts such as cooperative learning, vertical grouping,

and "hands-on" learning have always been the cornerstones of home schooling, but have only recently found their way into the public school classroom.

Conversations with home school parents will refer many times to their children's participation in community service activities. Many schools in recent years have moved toward making it a requirement for graduation.

Assessment for home scholars has rarely been standardized tests unless required by the state. Home schoolers use portfolios for the most part. With so much of the recent assessment research calling for multiple assessment tools, many schools are moving toward portfolio assessment.

Further validating this research is Seuffert (1990) a home school parent who believes that so much of home schooling is based on diversity. The great variety of options available, assures that motivated parents can find, or design, an educational program that will satisfy their child's needs (p.71). This is much like Gardner's learning styles, and truly a multi-modal approach.

This section discussed the many things that can be learned from home schoolers. Lines (1987) found among other things that the comparative effects of one-to-one-v large group instruction could be studied. Van Galen (1988a) saw the potential of the pedagogy employed by home schoolers being applicable to traditional schools. Further, Knowles (1998) found potential in using home schools as learning labs.

New Jersey Home School Statistics

The New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Field Services, (1997) places

the number of students in the State who are home schooling at 2000. In its recent report, (1997) the Division provides an overview of home schooling, the court cases both nation-wide and locally that established its legality, parameters, entitlements, and the role of the local Board of Education. Specifically the report establishes the following: "A public school district is not required or permitted to test a child educated at home, to review the quality of instruction provided or to monitor the results of home instruction unless the parents request and the public school district so chooses" (p.4).

This premise basically capsulizes the State's position of a hands off demeanor in relation to home schoolers. In fact, early on in the report, readers are directed to local Boards for the definition of the requirement of "equivalent instruction." This opens the door to a latitude of determinants for home schooling.

In a phone conversation with Mr. John Lally, Office of Nonpublic School Services for the State, (April 27, 1997 @ 9:00 am) he was unable to provide any additional information. When questioned on how the report arrived at the number of 2000 as the home school population for the State, he responded that the information came from a NJ home school association, not a totally unbiased organization. In any event, what is obvious is that virtually no research-based data exists concerning the home school movement in New Jersey.

Again in the Spring of 2000, the State of New Jersey attempted to assemble a data base on home schooled children in the State. Surveys were sent to all district superintendents asking for the number of home schoolers within the district. The

number reported was almost double the 1997 figure; but this is not an accurate account either. Many districts reported no data according to Mr. Lally as they stopped keeping records when all restrictions were lifted from home schoolers as a result of suits filed in reference to State v. Mazza (1967). The State is seeking to compile an accurate statistic to see if the home school growth in New Jersey is evolving at the 15-20% annual growth rate as is currently being experienced throughout the country (Lines, 2000).

New Jersey is a state of approximately 2000 home schoolers. In 1997 and again in 2000, the NJ Department of Education was attempting to assess the number of home schoolers in the state and determine the rate of growth. This was achieved through districtwide surveys.

Legal Analysis of Home Schooling

The most extensive body of literature on home schooling exists in the area of the law as it applies to home schooling and its interpretation. Since no federal case law exists, states have utilized wide interpretive power in handing down judgments. The basis for all the home school litigation is an accusation that either the 1st, 9th, or 14th amendment rights of the home schoolers has been violated. Contestations on the basis of the 1st amendment are the easiest resolved as they apply to freedom of religion, and in the cases where parents have sought to home school for that reason there is little recourse for local districts. More difficult to mediate, has been litigation based on the 9th and the 14th amendments which cover right to privacy and due

process.

To fully understand the law as it applies to home schooling, this review must be divided into three sections. First, a review of general educational case law that was used as a point of reference to decide many of the first home school cases; second, specific home school litigation that has served as precedent setting case law; third, a general review of the legal home school literature to this point.

Bumstead (1979) reports on one of the premier cases in home schooling: *Perchemlides -v- Frizzle* (Massachusetts, 1977). Upon appeal, home schooling was allowed for two young boys living in Amherst, Massachusetts. Bumstead saw this decision as the first time "a judge {had} conferred constitutional protection upon the right of education at home...This protection is based on the right to privacy that emanates from more specific guarantees contained in the Bill of Rights, especially the 9th Amendment." (p.57)

The judge ruled that the socialization requirement was an impossibility for home schoolers to achieve, so it could not be included as an element of the home school guidelines. Additionally, he ruled that it was not a viable request for parents to be required to replicate the district's curriculum. Based on this ruling, the local district was forced to reassess the parent's application to home school, and approved it; albeit 17 months after initially rejecting it.

The work of Sendor (1983) provides an overview of three key cases, one of which is specifically home school related. He warns that school board must keep abreast of home school legislation/litigation, or they will find themselves embroiled in costly

cases that they have no chance of winning. The example Sendor uses is a North Carolinas case that a district brought against a family who was home schooling for religious reasons. The judgment came down in favor of the home school family based on *Wisconsin-v-Yoder* (1972) and a state law which deregulated private schools (1979). The author makes the point that knowledge of the law not only saves money, but perhaps equally as important, bad press for the local districts.

Harris and Fields (1982) presented a legal analysis of home school litigation to that date. They present and review the landmark cases *Pierce*, *Meyer*, and *Perchemlides*, but what makes this review important is that it is highlighted with the discrepancies that exist from state to state.

There truly is no home school barometer. In *State (NJ) -v- Massa* (1967) socialization was not a necessary component for home schoolers; hence, the family prevailed. Conversely, in *Knox -v- O'Brien* (NJ, 1950), an earlier decision, it was the determining fact in denying the parents the right to home school. Furthermore, court decisions are regularly reversed upon appeal: *Perchemlides* (1979); *State -v- Sessions* (1978) not so much due to varying interpretations, but because of "changing popular attitudes" (p.31).

Tobak and Zirkle (1982) presented a particularly relevant picture of the law as it applied to home schooling. They categorized the home school laws and then applied the case law that was germane to each category.

Category I is the "no exception" classification that is in operation in fourteen states. This means that a home school must qualify as a private school because the

law reads if a child is not educated in a public school, the education must take place in a private school. The decisions handed down by the court were usually split between the schools and the home schoolers. Landmark cases at that time were *State (Kansas) -v-Lowery* (1963) which failed to recognize the Lowery home as a school because it did not provide the proper socialization that occurs in a school setting, and *Scoma-v-Chicago Board of Education* (1974) which established home schools as private schools.

The second category, equivalency, is the law in 21 states, and the object of the most litigation because the term is so nebulous. New Jersey leads the way in this litigation. One of the earliest cases, *Knox-v-O'Brien* (1950) saw the conviction of home school parents due to the absence of the socialization component. But two later cases, *State-v-Vaughn* (1965), and *State-v-Massa* (1967) found that only academics could be assessed for equivalency, not socialization.

The last category, exception, is utilized by fifteen states. In this category, the law specifically allows home schooling. While there are still parameters that parents must follow, there is little litigation in the states whose laws are exception laws. Though in one particular case, *TAF-v-Duval County {Florida}* (1973) the court did decide against the home school family because it was found that they were home schooling to prevent racial mixing.

Constitutional cases i.e. *Pierce-v-Society of Sisters*; *Meyer-v-Nebraska*; *Wisconsin-v-Yoder*; *Farrington-v-Tokushige* are presented for their precedential value as they "combine to form the legal framework for the power of the state to

require and regulate education" (p.19).

With the majority of home school cases brought as result of perceived abridgments of the 1st or 14th amendment, the authors present three cases that have been landmark home school cases that were decided on the merits of the aforementioned constitutional cases. Two cases in Ohio, *State-v-Whiser* (1976) and *State ex. rel Nagle-v-Olin* (1980) were decided in favor of the parents based on *Wisconsin-v-Yoder*. Both cases involved parental home schooling based on religious reasons. While neither family was Amish, their situations were similar enough to *Yoder* as to be governed by the same principles. The *Perchemildes-v-Fizzle* (1978) the most notorious of the home school cases is referenced, as it registered a win for both sides.

Divoky (1983) looked at the incidents of cooperation and the incidents of harassment that have occurred in the home school movement. It appears that California and Massachusetts are the most liberal when it comes to home schoolers, and Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Indiana the most litigious.

The definitive study of home school laws, their impact, inherent problems, and suggested remedies was conducted by Patricia Lines (1985). This extensive research looked at precedent setting compulsory education laws and their influence on subsequent litigation.

Lines presents a 50 state overview of ten home school elements such as mandating certification (8), and requiring parallel curriculum (16) among others. The more she attempts to uncover a unifying thread that could create a composite, the more obvious it becomes that there is none. She turns to an analysis of some of the

prevailing case law i.e. Yoder, Perchemlides, but they seem equally disassociated. Finally, relying on the conjoined corollaries of the fifty state overview, a series of state-wide interviews and the prevailing case law, Lines comes up with a model that states could adopt to bring some continuity to the home school statutes: laws should show flexibility, and state only the minimum needed. This seems too simple a panacea to placate the stakeholders, and bring an end to the litigation. It is like putting a band-aid on a wound that needs stitches.

Since it is the compulsory attendance law that districts had utilized to bring charges against home school parents, Staver (1987), categorizes the laws on the books in all 50 states into three areas:

1. a child must attend a public or private school
2. a child must attend a public school or be receiving equivalent instruction
3. a child may be schooled at home

If your state statute reads as stated in the first category, this is the most problematic for home school parents as they must then establish themselves as a private school. There are a number of guidelines that must be adhered to that in some cases are so severe as to all but preclude home schooling for all but the most die-hard home school parents. If your state's statute is akin to the second citation, home schooling is less of a problem, though some states interpret equivalent instruction to mean that a certified teacher must be doing the teaching. Other interpretations have been easier to get around, but the certification issue has been the subject of much recent home

school litigation. The third category of statute enacted by 29 states is the most user friendly for home schoolers.

An historical perspective of some state's case law and its impact on home schooling was reviewed by Buchanan (1987). Beginning with the decision in School Board District, Garcia County et al -v- Thompson et. al. [Oklahoma, 1909] which affirmed that the education of children was the primary responsibility of parents, he includes the more recent Wisconsin -v- Yoder (1972) which permitted Amish families to remove their children from public school after the eighth grade. Buchanan reasons that many of the problems over parental rights in home schooling stem from the fact that the US Constitution does not specifically mention parental rights and how it is conjoined to education. Because of this home school parents must rely on reference to amendments 9 and 14 that involve privacy rights and due process. But Buchanan believes that the personal liberties that are guaranteed under the 14th amendment are broad enough to allow parents to direct their children's education.

In weeding through the state laws, Bolick (1987) found that they could be categorized into three distinct tracts: equivalency laws which necessitated only that home educators show that their instruction is on an even par with public schools; certification laws which mandate that anyone engaged in home instruction must be certified; and prohibition laws which demands that any education not taking place in a public school, must take place in a private school. This provides the greatest challenge to home schoolers as they must establish their home schools as private schools.

Klicka (1988) discusses the two constitutional amendments that are invoked in home school cases: one and fourteen. For parents home schooling for religious reasons the 1st amendment is invoked. For parents home schooling for secular reasons, the 14th amendment is utilized. The interesting point made in Klicka's presentation is that the 14th amendment guarantees due process. Due process is to be provided by a neutral decision maker. School boards and superintendents usually hear the case of the home schoolers in the initial phase. Surely, they cannot be considered neutral when they many times perceive the request to home school to be an affront to public education. Because of this, many appellate courts have overturned home school cases in the favor of the family.

Sacken (1988) replicates much of what Lines (1985) did by presenting an overview of case law surrounding compulsory attendance. The difference in this research is that Sacken gives reasons for the on-going battle between the states' attempts to regulate non-public education and those who oppose it.

[I] will argue that the constraints on parental desires to control their children's education are often rooted in paternalistic, largely unjustified social analysis, and that legal doctrine has failed to weigh properly the competing interests in these conflicts. (p.395)

The review divides the varying statutes into two distinct areas: health and safety and institutional quality control. For private and parochial schools these parameters do not pose much of a problem as they approximate the public school model. These

statutes have the most impact on home schoolers, particularly in the area of quality control where some states require all teachers to be certified. In these cases home school parents seek relief through the 14th amendment. These cases have met with only moderate success. Sacken (1988) believes that a misunderstanding of parental interests coupled with insufficient legal analysis of state motives, act as a dual challenge to home school cases.

One explanation for the courts tendency to support state regulations of home schooling is that there exists an institutional paradigm that establishes what schools are, who can teach in them, and what is taught. If the milieu of education does not fit into this paradigm, it is unacceptable. The solution seems simple: create a home school paradigm; for if there was consistency from state to state, it would lend some consistency to court decisions. Additionally, due to the mobility inherent in our society, Sacken questions how there could be differing versions of compelling interest which appears to lie at the heart of litigation brought by the states.

Zakariya's (1988) research furnishes a picture of present day litigation. While initially, home school litigation was simply over the right to home school, more recent litigation has evolved into battles that center around what should be taught, what credentials the instructor should possess, and assessment of the home school program. It is in this more recent litigation, that home school parents have been less successful.

In reporting the home school case law to date, Zirkle (1988) validates much of Staver's (1987) findings in regards to statute though he chooses different nomen-

clature to identify the laws. Zirkle identifies the three types of statutes as :

1. no exception laws: a child must attend a public or private school
2. implied exception laws: a child must be given "equivalent instruction"
3. express exception laws: clearly permit home schooling

In effect in nine states, the first kind of law is the most problematic, as home school parents must establish themselves as private schools opening themselves up to a myriad of regulations that are sometimes impossible to put into place forcing the parents to go underground.

The second type of state, in place in 15 states is more home school friendly, but legal challenges are still many as the concept of "equivalent instruction" is subject to varied interpretation.

The third type of statute, in place in 26 states, has virtually no legal challenges because it overtly permits home schooling.

Parents who chose to home school for religious reasons pursued challenges by invoking their 1st amendment right relying on the Wisconsin -v- Yoder (1972) decision. Zirkle (1988) noted that several states held a narrow interpretation of that decision citing the uniqueness of the principles involved noting that few religions, if any could invoke the cultural restrictions of the Amish.

There is also a group of home school parents who invoke their 14th amendment rights. These are parents who home school for more secular reasons. Many of these parents protest restrictions place upon them based on a vagueness in the compulsory attendance laws.

For those parents who chose to home school for secular reasons, the case law referenced is Meyer -v- Nebraska, and Pierce -v- the Society of Sisters. These have been equally as unsuccessful in most cases because the later dealt with private school education, and the former, parental right within a public school. The contestation on the vagueness of the compulsory attendance laws have been more successful, though not entirely for home school parents.

Perhaps nothing underscores the on-going battle between the state and home schoolers more than the tragic 1982 shooting death of a home school parent who resisted arrest for violating the compulsory attendance laws for his children. While this is certainly the exception, it does punctuate the parental commitment to home school and the states' resistance to the movement.

In the midst of all the legal battles over home schooling, Roach (1988) is ready to concede that the battle is fruitless. Instead of "going to war" with home school parents, a battle school districts are more likely to lose than win, she suggests, via the National Association of School Boards, a more prudent approach. State boards should establish five general parameters for home schooling that will accomplish a two fold purpose. First, to permit the families who so desire to engage in home schooling, and second, safeguard the education of the children under the auspices of the state. Among these elements are the following: establish student competencies, require quarterly reporting for a two-year period; establish systems of probation, remediation, and evaluation. These guidelines allow for liberal choice of materials, and curricula, leading Roach to believe that the plan is a workable one for all

concerned.

McCarthy (1991) reviews state-by-state case law as it applies to home schooling. The general consensus is that there is no general consensus. States vary not only in the scope of what is considered to be home schooling, but also what is permitted in the home school environment. Generally, it was found that the compulsory attendance laws that had been used to file charges against home school parents were in many cases too vague to hold up when challenged in court.

Two previously presented cases involving the Bennett and DeJonge families were reviewed by Zirkle (1991) who believes that these two cases have done much to define case law as it applies to home schoolers as points of reference for other states. Though at the time the article was written, both families had lost appeals based on a violation of their 14th amendment rights, Zirkle questioned the validity of the requirement that a teacher certificate was necessary. (Zirkle's question was prophetic as the State Supreme Court overturned the lower court decisions and found in favor of both the Bennetts and the DeJonges in 1992).

As state-by-state laws were passed permitting home schooling in some fashion, the challenges to home schooling subsided as the debate over regulation took control. Russo and Mawdsley (1992) squared off in just such a debate. Russo, evoking the 10th amendment and "parens patriae" believes that the government has a moral obligation to insure that children are properly educated especially in a world driven by technology. He believes further that strict regulations should govern who educates the home school child, and the proper assessment of the home schoolers development.

His further concerns focus on the lack of socialization, and the inability to interact with diverse populations.

In response, Mawdsley (1992) believes that inflicting stricter regulations on home schooling would destroy not only the family bond that home schoolers are attempting to develop, but also the latitude to use varying approaches to meet the individual needs of their children. Further, he states that home schoolers have proven successful with minimal restrictions, while the public schools have glaring failures with restrictions. If parental involvement has been proven to be key to a child's success in school, where else but in home schooling is there more parental involvement, he challenges.

Responding to the call for fewer restrictions was the Governor of Arizona. West (1993) reports that in a state that had a number of stringent requirements among which was the mandatory test of basic skills to be administered to and passed by home school parents, great strides have been made. In addition to dropping the testing requirement for parents, the Governor passed a bill that requires home schoolers to be tested only every three years on a nationally normed test. Assessment is conducted by independent sources, and the only requirement for home schoolers beyond the three year testing is to sign an affidavit that they are conforming to the state's compulsory attendance law.

Lest anyone should labor under the notion that the home school movement is some mom and pop operation, the HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association) was able to mobilize 900,000 home school parents in a matter of ten days to protest a

House bill that would have required all teachers to be certified in the subject area they taught, regardless of where they taught. Kennedy (1994) reported that approximately 700,000 calls were received by House members prior to the vote. The bill was soundly defeated by a vote of 424-1.

As previously noted, amendments 1, 9, and 14, provide the basis for home school litigation. Tompkins (1991) concurred with the findings of Buchanan (1987) in his quest to determine the right of parents to home school predicated on a parent's fundamental privacy rights. He referenced landmark cases such as *Meyer -v- Nebraska* (1923) [based on the 14th amendment; *Pierce -v- the Society of Sisters* (1925) [based also on the 14th amendment[; and *Wisconsin -v- Yoder* (1972) [based on the 1st amendment.

Tompkins (1991) found that with the exception of petitions to home school for religious reasons which were clearly covered in the 1st amendment, the right of privacy guaranteed in the 14th amendment could serve as the cornerstone for establishing home schooling as a fundamental right as guaranteed in the Constitution for all other cases. Citing *Yoder* (1972), *Pierce* (1925), and *Meyer* (1923), he believes that child rearing practices which relate to education is a privacy issue; hence, a fundamental right, and offers the following: "When a fundamental right clashes with a compelling State interest, due process dictates that the state must show that it has chosen the least restrictive means to achieve its interest. Thus the State may only use the least restrictive means to regulate home education. (p.315)

He finds further in his research, that the issue of certification, or utilizing district

curriculum would be restrictive particularly in the later case as that could well be the reason the parents choose to home school. Testing is viewed as the least restrictive means of regulation as it is "ends oriented" as opposed to certification and curriculum which are "means oriented."

The legal analysis of home schooling is the most voluminous. It covers Constitutional law focusing on the 1st, 9th, and 14th amendment with key Supreme Court cases such as *Wisconsin-v-Yoder* (1972) and *Pierce-v-the Society of Sisters* (1925). Litigation initially focused on preventing home schooling, but as case after case was decided in favor of the home schoolers, district litigation turned to controlling home schooling. The determining case for the State of New Jersey was *State-v-Massa* (1967) which made the issue of socialization an unnecessary component for New Jersey home schoolers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

From 1997 to 2000, The Department of Education in the State of New Jersey has made a concerted effort to address the issue of Home Schooling within the State. As recently as February 24, 2000, the Assistant Commissioner's Office sent out a survey to all Chief School Administrators asking them to identify the number of students within the district who are home schooled. Further, in 1997, the Division of Field Services issued a home school overview which included legal, entitlements, and the role of boards. In speaking with the Office of Educational Services and Interagency Initiatives that is overseeing the survey, the impetus for the survey appears to be perhaps the underestimation of home schoolers in New Jersey and the impact that this may have local boards. When asked what they hoped to use this information for, their appeared to be no immediate or long-range plan.

Though home schooling is allowed in all 50 states Cloud and Morse (2001), New Jersey still engages in litigation with home school families over issues not directly related to the request to home school, but the ancillary issues such as participation in extra curricular activities.

Selection of the Sample

If the Mason Dixon Line had been extended further to the east it would have intersected New Jersey about 20 miles north of Atlantic City. The relevance of this information lies in the diversity of the 21 counties that comprise the State of New Jersey and the determination of the selected sample. New Jersey encompasses areas that reflect the highest cost of living in the country (CNN, May 5, 2001) to those living in the abject poverty of the inner cities of Camden, Newark and Paterson. New Jersey is known as the Garden State, but at the same time can be prone to ozone alerts due to the heavy industrialization that is part of the I-95 corridor. New Jersey is known for its shoreline, its skyline, and at the same time its dividing line between the needs and wants of the southwestern part of the state that differs so drastically from the northeastern part of the state.

In the hope of achieving a representative sample of home schoolers, it was decided that the central Jersey counties would be used as a sample. The counties chosen: Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset, and Union reflect all the diversity that the State has to offer; hence, a valid representation of home schoolers. Further, these counties reflect school populations that span the DFG (District Factor Groups) as determined by the State (1975) [the DFG was reconfigured in 1984 and again in 1998 due to two factors. First, the 1980 and 1990 censuses resulted in a restructuring of the seven indices that comprise the district factor groups and

two, the Robinson v Cahill and Abbott v Burke rulings (NJDOE 2001)) that indicate a wide range of socio-economic factors.

The initial contact was made with Nancy Plent, the editor of *Unschoolers Network* in Farmingdale, New Jersey in May of 2000. *Unschoolers Network* is monthly newsletter circulated throughout the state to families who either home school, are interested in home schooling in the future, or who support the movement. A request was made to send out a 20-question survey along with a demographic profile to the home schoolers who reside in the four targeted counties to enlist responses and perhaps interview participation. For purposes of anonymity, the *Unschoolers Network* would send out the surveys along with an issue of the newsletter. Self-addressed stamped envelopes would accompany the surveys. This mailing would be sent to approximately 550 families.

As a result of the returned surveys, in addition to the data to be aggregated, home schoolers who responded that they would participate in the interview were identified. These families would be part of the second phase of the study that included a series of observational periods with accompanying questions. These interviews/observations took place in the homes of the home-schoolers at a pre-determined least obtrusive time. The interview/observation periods usually lasted for one to two hours at a time and took place over a three month period occurring at least two times and in one instance three times.

The second group of participants in this study was the superintendents. Utilizing the County Superintendents' Offices of the counties identified for

study: Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset and Middlesex, a request for names and mailing addresses was made. From that list of 85 superintendents, a mailing was completed. Anonymous surveys replete with self-addressed stamped envelopes were included for return.

All participants were apprised not only of the nature of the study, but also the confidentiality requisite as set forth by Seton Hall University's Review Panel. All participation was voluntary and subjects could absent themselves at any juncture. Further, all participants were advised that the results would be readily available for their review should they desire.

It was determined that for the survey answers, results would be reported in simple percentages for straightforward interpretation. Further, it was determined that the interviews would be scripted in edited form relating only data germane to the study.

Triangulation of data in the form of surveys, interviews, observations, and review of documents (case law) was the standard used for analysis.

Materials

The parents' questionnaire consisted of a ten-item short answer survey (see Appendix 4). The survey was based on a partial replication of the research of Greene (1984), Gustavson (1988), Van Galen (1988a), and Mayberry (1989), with input from the Institutional Review Board at Seton Hall University in South Orange, the researcher's mentor, George Lindemer, Ph.D. and Nancy Plent,

editor of *Unschoolers Network*. Additionally, demographic data was collected through a simple five question check off sheet (see Appendix 4). Further materials employed included the informed consent form for parents (Appendix 6) and the informed consent form for children (Appendices 7 and 8). For parents who agreed to participate in the interview/observation phase of the study, there existed an additional series of questions (Appendix 5). In this phase of the study, in addition to a notebook for recording observational data, a recorder was used during the interview phase to insure accuracy of response recollection.

To collect the data from the Superintendents, a seven-question survey was utilized (Appendix 2). This survey was based partially on the research of Lindley (1985) and O'Neill (1988). The survey included short answer and check off responses. Once again, input was provided by the researcher's mentor, George Lindemer, Ph.D.

The only further materials required were a spreadsheet program on the computer and a calculator to determine simple percentages.

The home school survey was initially piloted in July of 2000. The surveys were sent as out with the *Unschoolers Network* newsletter. From the parental comments, modifications were made in the survey so that the sought after responses would be forthcoming.

Design of Research

As this is a qualitative study, survey; interview; and observation were used.

Triangulation of data is the methodology to be employed to manipulate the data. This methodology is being employed as it assures internal validity (Javid, 1998).

While some of the data collected has been quantified as in the case of the home school parents and the superintendents' surveys, the preponderance of data can best be examined via qualitative methodologies.

Step one in the qualitative process was to examine the case law that has directly impacted home schooling. From the general study of home school law was an examination of home school law as it directly relates to New Jersey students. Step two in the process occurred after the survey results were returned. Based on the responses, interviews were scheduled and conducted via phone and in person. Step three was to conduct on site observations. This process allowed for a visualization of home schooling environment that validated the collected data to date.

The choice of a qualitative design is supported by the work of Jones (1997) who found that:

1. Qualitative methodologies allow the cognitive and affective components of {home school} to be explored in greater depth.
2. Qualitative methodologies encourage the informant to introduce concepts of importance from the emic aspect, rather than adhering to subject areas that have been

predetermined by the researcher.

3. Qualitative approaches permit the identification of longitudinal changes.
4. Qualitative methods, especially observation, or unstructured interviews allow the researcher to develop an overall "picture" of the subject under investigation.
5. Qualitative methods may assist the researcher in understanding the underlying explanations of significance.
6. Qualitative methods allow for unexpected developments that may arise as part of such research. (p.3)

The qualitative design gives the researcher the latitude to construct a multi-dimensional perspective of home schooling as a reform movement and the potential it may have to impact public school reform. A surface analysis that sometimes occurs as a result of quantitative research will not yield the intended information that is needed to develop a comparative theory. Further, "theory is developed from an understanding of 'ground events' i.e. the experience as shared and understood by the participants and the observer" (Rists, 1979, p. 20).

Procedures

The superintendents' surveys were mailed out inclusive of the return self-

addressed envelope with a turn around time of one month in April of 2000.

As the surveys were returned, they were filed and any accompanying data i.e. district policy on home schooling was separated for later qualitative discovery. Once the surveys were returned an Excel spread sheet was configured to record the data with ample space for comments. After extending the return time by one week, the data collected was configured for reporting purposes.

The home school parent surveys were delivered to the editor of the newsletter *Unschoolers Network*. Each survey included a self-addressed stamped envelope for return in a month. The surveys were sent by the editor along with the newsletter in July 2000. Returned surveys were aggregated into two groups: home schoolers responding to the survey alone and home schoolers acquiescing to the request to participate in the observation phase of the study. After an extended period of recanvassing the home school population culminating in June 2001, the data was recorded in table form using a computer database. Reviewing the data collected, averages and percentages were calculated where applicable. Comments were recorded for tally purposes. Demographic data was collected in a spreadsheet and tallied for percentages.

For the interviews/observations, appointments were made for convenient times to conduct phone interviews and observations. Phone interviews lasted from 15 to 30 minutes and took place over a period of one month in the Spring of 2000. Recording was done by scripting and a recording device through speakerphone. Immediately after these interviews, the conversations were

transcribed in dialogue format. The observation times were scheduled for periods of at least one hour and no more than two hours. Scripting and recording were also the methods employed to assure accurate recollection. These events were immediately transcribed, but in narrative format.

Treatment of Data

Since the term triangulation was introduced over thirty years ago (Denzin, 1970) the phrase has gone through a metamorphosis. Kelle (2001) identifies three of the connotations that have evolved from the term triangulation.

1. Triangulation as the mutual validation of results obtained on the basis of different methods (the validity model)
2. Triangulation as a means toward obtaining a larger, more complete picture of the phenomenon under study (the complementary model).
3. Triangulation in its original trigonometrical sense, indicating that a combination of methods is necessary in order to gain any (not necessarily a fuller) picture of the relevant phenomenon at all (the trigonometry model). {p.5}

For the purpose of this study the complementary model of triangulation will be utilized.

After being recorded on a spread sheet, the demographic data will be

aggregated for presentation in percentile format as will the home schoolers' survey. The exception with the latter data is that the anecdotal responses will be scripted for presentation with the survey data.

The surveys from the superintendents will be presented in simple percentiles with a brief summary of the accompanying data that was sent by the schools in relation to home school policy.

A notebook will be employed during the interview/observation phase in addition to a tape recorder. Transcripts of the interview/observation session will be presented in dialogue format.

The definitive analysis will be a review of all the data collected across groups. This will allow for extrapolation of similarities and establish the foundation to draw inferences and make suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to establish a profile of home schoolers in Central New Jersey and to assess home schooling's function as a school reform model. From this could be extrapolated the techniques that home schoolers utilize that make them successful (Duvall, et al., 1997). Consequently, the applicability of these techniques to mainstream education could be determined and suggested as data for further study.

This information was to be garnered through a survey of Central New Jersey home schoolers and Central New Jersey Superintendents. On the parental side questions that dealt with reasons, services, and relations between the zoned school and the home school were queried. On the superintendent's side, questions ranging from benefits, detriments, and simple identifications were queried.

The second part of the study included interviews and observations of home school families to glean a perspective of the learning environment and what could be extrapolated to public schools to enhance student learning. The findings are presented in the tables that follow.

New Jersey is comprised of 21 counties and five distinct areas. The northern part of the state covers the counties of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Passaic, the northwestern part of the state covers the areas of Sussex, Hunterdon, and

Warren; the southern counties are divided into the shore counties of Atlantic, Cape May, Ocean, and lower Monmouth, while the Southwestern counties are identified as Burlington, Camden Gloucester, Cumberland, and Mercer. The central counties are Union, Middlesex, Upper Monmouth and Somerset. Each of these counties reflects a distinct part of New Jersey. The choice to focus on Central Jersey was divined because it encompasses areas of great wealth (DFG:J=Montgomery Township and Bedminster) deepest poverty (DFG: A=Asbury Park and Elizabeth), the urban thirty schools (DFG:A=Plainfield and Long Branch), rural areas (Farmingdale and Marlboro) and shore areas (Belmar and Manasquan). It is a little of everything that New Jersey is.

Superintendents' Surveys

In the counties identified as Central New Jersey (Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset, and Union) there were 85 Superintendents. Surveys were sent to all the superintendents. There was a response from 49 superintendents which is a return rate of 58%. From those superintendents responding, the following data is presented.

Table 1

Central New Jersey Superintendent's Survey on Home Schoolers

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
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1. Do you have identified students in your district who are being home schooled?

Table 1 con't

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
Yes	43	88%
No	6	12%
2. Number of Home Schoolers	43	408
3. Does the Board have a policy on home schooled students?		
Yes	10	20%
No	39	80%
4. Does the Board provide any support or engage in any communication with parents?		
Yes	16	33%
No	33	67%
5. Do the children partake in any Public school activities?		
Yes	6	12%
No	43	88%
6. What do you perceive to be the greatest benefit for students who are home schooled?		
No benefit	23	46%
Individual attention	9	19%
bonding/control	9	19%
intense curriculum	4	8%
religion	2	4%
field trips	1	2%
flexibility	1	2%
7. What do you perceive to be the greatest detriment for students who are home schooled?		

Table 1 con't

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
Lack of socialization	33	6%
Quality of instruction	13	26%
Lack of diversity	3	7%
8. Please place a check next to all items you believe to be key in a whole school reform model.		
Parental involvement	40	80%
Small classes	37	76%
Staff Development	36	73%
Access to Technology	33	67%
Cross Curricular Instruction	31	63%
Practical Learning	26	53%
Flexible Scheduling	27	55%
Community Service	23	47%
Increased Budget	18	37%
Career Exposure	16	33%
Strict Discipline	6	12%

A number of interesting data emerged from this survey. On the positive side 33% of the respondents said that there was support for and communication with home school families. This is a significantly larger percentage than in most districts where for the most part a hands off policy is the general rule.

On the negative side, 46% of the Superintendents responded that they saw no benefit to home schooling. In a field where change and innovation are more common than not, it is disturbing that almost half of the respondents could not elevate their thinking "out of the box" to see some benefit to those parents who choose to

home school their children. Further, it is perhaps that negativity that forces so many home schoolers underground.

On the interesting side, superintendents responded that parental involvement and small classes were the two top necessities of whole school reform. It is more than a coincidence that those are the key aspects of home schooling.

Home Schoolers' Surveys

Gathering the data from this cohort posed the most problems. The initial mailing went to 550 subscribers of the *Unschoolers Network*, a newsletter published out of Farmingdale, New Jersey. While this number included people who were interested in home schooling their children in the future, those interested in the movement in general, former home schoolers as well as present home schoolers, it certainly does not represent all the home schoolers in Central New Jersey. Some home schoolers choose to stay underground and disassociate themselves with any type of organization. Further, while the number reported by the district superintendents is 408, that number is skewed for a variety of reasons including the fact that the response rate for superintendents was only 58% and there are probably a significant number of homeschool parents who never register with the district.

Many home school parents remain suspect of researchers even when the intent of the research is clear. Even follow-up mailings and solicitations failed to bring the number of respondents up significantly. Of the 550 surveys that were sent out, 212 home schoolers returned surveys representing 39%. Another 11 people returned

surveys stating that they subscribed to the newsletter because they were anticipating home schooling in the future and 13 more were returned with comments ranging from pure interest in the movement to graduate students studying home schooling. Subtracting these numbers from the total would bring the number to 526 with a response rate of 40 % not a significant difference. In spite of this the following information is presented.

Table 2

Central New Jersey Home Schoolers Survey

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
1. For what reasons did you elect to home school?		
Didn't like what they saw in the public schools	64	30%
Need to maintain an intimate relationship/learning environment	28	13%
Religious reasons	28	13%
Pressure from other home schoolers	17	8%
Age Requirement to start school	13	6%
Child requested it	13	6%
Negative peer pressure (school)	9	4%
Freedom to Learn/Student Directed	8	4%

Table 2 con't

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
Wanted Children to be Children Longer	8	4%
Public School are Misdirected	8	4%
Health Reasons	4	2%
Too Much Time Spent on Discipline	4	2%
2. How long have you been home schooling?		
One Year or less	74	35%
Two to five years	60	28%
Over five years	78	37%
3. What type of curriculum do you use to home school your children?		
Eclectic	106	50%
Calvert	36	17%
Abecka	15	7%
Christian	15	7%
Oak Meadows	9	4%
Saxon Math	8	4%
University of Nebraska	5	2%
Bob Jones University	4	2%
Living is Learning	4	2%

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
John Holt	4	2%
Local District Adapted to Needs	4	2%
Correspondence Courses	2	1%

4. Have you ever employed an assessment to evaluate your child's growth?

Yes	87	41%
No	125	59%

What instrument was employed? What were the results? How were they used?

Iowa Test	27	31%
Stanford 9	27	31%
CAT Testing	22	25%
CTBS	6	7%
Calvert	5	6%
Children scoring at the 80 th percentile or above	87	100%
Used for a personal gauge of academic achievement	87	100%

5. Do you have a PC? How is it used in your child's education?

Owners of a PC	197	93%
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Table 2 con't

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
Do not have or use a PC	15	7%
Learning Games/Enrichment/Reinforcement	57	29%
Research	55	28%
Not used in the education of child	39	20%
Word Processing	30	15%
Email	10	5%
Record Keeping	6	3%

7. In what non-academic activities does your child participate?

Competitive Sports (soccer, basketball, football)	49	23%
Dance	25	12%
Scouting	23	11%
Swimming	21	10%
Music	17	8%
Art	15	7%
Church groups	15	7%
Gymnastics	11	5%
Plays with neighborhood kids	9	4%

Table 2 con't

Category	Number	%
Skateboard/rollerblading	8	4%
Horseback Riding	6	3%
Crafts	2	1%
None	11	5%

7. Do you utilize any of the services from your local public school?

No services used	182	86%
Services used	30	14%

Of the 14% who avail themselves of district services, 73% (22) did not name a specific service. The other 27% (8) said that they had received the New Jersey Core Content Standards which they used as a guide; were required to report yearly to the superintendent (interesting because this is illegal); borrowed text and curriculum; and some home school children were actually able to participate in classes such as vocational education and social studies field trips.

8. What do you see as the advantages to home schooling?

Intimacy with the children	49	23%
Child's option to explore/develop unique ideas	23	11%
Family harmony	23	11%
Learn at own pace	19	9%

Table 2 con't

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
Cover more information and in greater depth	19	9%
No peer pressure	19	9%
Family values are taught	19	9%
Student/Teacher ratio	11	5%
Independence	11	5%
Gift of Time	11	5%
Controlled environment	4	2%
Stress free	4	2%

9. What are the disadvantages of home schooling?

Lack of socialization/isolation	59	28%
Society's perception	42	20%
Demands on time/time restraints	28	13%
No disadvantages	23	11%
Expensive	19	9%
No set schedule to teach	15	7%
Exclusion from school extracurricular activities	15	7%
Stressful	6	3%
Child avoids the subjects she doesn't like	5	2%

The responses reflected the general sentiment of home schoolers nationally. More parents are moving to home schooling for academic reasons rather than religious reasons (Lines, 2000). Many of the parents who are currently home schooling had experience with the public school system and found that the schools did not meet their children's needs or they simply didn't like what they saw in the schools.

In respect to length of time, there is a relatively even split between the beginners and those who have home schooled in excess of five years. Most of the parents are comfortable with the early education of their children. It is only when their children near high school that they consider a return to traditional education.

While in the 70's and 80's most of the home schoolers relied on prepackaged Christian curriculum, the modern home schoolers use a more eclectic approach. Many of their materials are purchased at home school conventions where vendors are in ample supply. Additionally they frequent the teachers' resource centers sprinkled throughout the state in addition to pulling many of their resources directly from the library.

Generally home schoolers do not employ standardized testing materials. They feel that this flies in the face of what they are intending to accomplish. For those surveyed who do utilize standardized tests, it was reported that 100% of those tested scored at the 80th percentile or above. While this statistic appears incredible, it does compare with other home schoolers results as noted in the literature review (Greene, 1984; Taylor, 1997).

Reflective of the times, 93% of the families own personal computers.

Interestingly, 20% do not use them as a teaching companion while those who do, use them primarily for research and to reinforce the home instruction.

Most of the home schoolers participate in some type of extra curricular activity with most active in town sports leagues. In spite of this home schoolers name socialization and isolation as the greatest disadvantage to home schooling. Perhaps the isolation comes from the second greatest identified disadvantage: society's perception. Many home schoolers say that community, neighbors, and even family view their decision to home school as an aberration at the very least and a cult like activity at the extreme. That perhaps explains the large percentage of parents who neither seek nor get services from their zoned school. They elect to stay secluded and maintain the intimacy that they find to be the greatest advantage to home schooling.

Table 3

Demographic Results

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
Age of primary home school educator:		
20-25	4	2%
26-30	0	0%
31-35	36	17%
36-40	40	19%

Table 3 con't

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
41-45	45	21%
46-50	59	28%
51-55	23	11%
56-60	5	2%

Gender of the person providing the majority of the home schooling:

Male	13	6%
Female	199	94%

Educational background of the person providing the home schooling:

High school (did not graduate)	5	2%
High school graduate	6	3%
Some college	83	39%
College Graduate	74	35%
Graduate school	36	17%
Doctorate	8	4%

Occupation prior to home schooling:

Teacher	32	15%
Business	36	17%

Table 3 con't

Response Category	Number of Responses	%
Retail	8	4%
Secretarial	28	13%
Computer Technology	8	4%
Communications	0	0%
Health Care	24	11%
Other	76	36%
Combined Family Income:		
\$15,000-\$20,000	4	2%
\$21,000-\$25,000	4	2%
\$26,000-\$30,000	19	9%
\$31,000-\$40,000	4	2%
\$41,000-\$50,000_	29	14%
\$51,000-\$60,000	49	23%
\$61,000-\$70,000	15	7%
\$71,000-\$80,000	15	7%
\$81,000-\$90,000	24	11%
\$91,000-\$100,000	15	7%
\$101,000-\$110,000	11	5%
\$ 111,000 +	23	11%

In a recent conversation (June 2001) with Nancy Plent, the editor of *Unschoolers Network*, the statistics are reflective of the national statistics generally. What she sees as the greatest change is the solicitation of information from high school students. Traditionally, parents had returned their children to the public school when they reached high school, but now she sees that changing. Much of the change she attributes to two causes: first, the size of high schools and second, the emotional atmosphere. The students are concerned for their personal safety in respect not only to violence, but also bullying. Mothers continue to be the primary educators of the children. The two differences are in the educational level of the educators which includes more college and the family income which may be as much reflective of the times and the locale than any other factor.

Observations

An observation was completed with one family in each of the counties studied. Using the observation instrument and interview, the following information was gleaned. Coded UC 1- Union County one, the first family was observed in their home where an area in the den was set aside for "school." The procedures were as a normal school day. The children arose at 7:00 am, had breakfast and went to the school area. They had mathematics first which took place for approximately one hour. The students had geography next utilizing an atlas, map and the newspaper. Next the students moved to English with a lot of writing in a journal. The home school parent told me that sometimes there is phonics instruction, but that the focus on formal

reading is very limited. The children go to the library and read constantly from books that they have checked out of the library. The children read novels, histories, and science. There was a reading list on hand that had been obtained from the district school system. After approximately three and one half hours, the children finished school for the day. The afternoons were devoted to educational trips and the library.

One particular trip was to Turtleback Zoo. This parent had developed a relationship with the tour guide and he would call her when an animal birth was taking place. The children spent the day at the zoo and the entire day was devoted to science. This appears to be the direction of most of what is taught. The newspaper which advertises many exhibits such as the Drake Museum in Plainfield or the Trenton Museum dictates the social studies that is taught.

The instruction is multi-modal and 25% child directed, 50% traditionally configured and 25% directed by practical experiences that are obtained from the newspapers. There was no evidence of a personal computer being used for instruction.

Interaction between the parent and child was sporadic. The child was left to work independently, but on the car trips to the zoo and the library, educational conversation was on-going. This ranged from background information on the site to be visited to observational comments and practical application of knowledge. Case in point was a family gathering that was being planned. A favorite recipe was to be prepared and a 15 minute conversation took place on the mathematics involved in doubling the recipe. It was via this conversation that it was observed that an informal assessment

was taking place. The measurement of half and quarter cups was reviewed with the child in the dialogue about the recipe.

The non-academic activities are centered around the church. In addition to Sunday School, the child participates in the choir.

There was much interesting information gleaned from these observations. First, the principal of the zoned school maintains contact with the home schooler and lends support whenever needed. Second, while this parent chose to home school to avoid the negative environment she felt was imbedded in the school system, she had very little positive to say about the educational structure. The home district has a DFG factor of B which places it among the poorest. It is difficult to rationalize administrative salaries upwards of \$80,000 when your student population at the elementary level is unable to read on grade level. The most humorous comment came when she discussed a problem she had initially experienced. When she decided to home school, her daughter got lazy because she thought she didn't have to go to school. You could hear the firmness in her voice as she responded to me "but we changed that quickly."

The second observation was in Monmouth County coded MOC1. The children awoke and were ready to start work by 9:00 am. The kitchen was the school site. Mathematics, taught for at least an hour, was the first subject taught. I was told that with her older child the mathematics instruction lasted longer as she progressed through her education lasting for almost two hours during the middle school years. Next the children moved into the family room where mother read a novel aloud. A

chapter a day is read and this lasts for about 45 minutes. The children go back into the kitchen for language arts and this lasts for 45 minutes to an hour. This is the basic schedule that is adhered to every day. The afternoon schedule varies between field trips and physical activities such as soccer games with other home schoolers. It is interesting to note that they compete against private schools in such sports as soccer. If the afternoon does not have a planned activity, the children will engage in social studies and science in a more formal setting in the kitchen. If the children are on their way to an activity, they may actually work in the car.

This parent is the curriculum coordinator for the home school association. Because of this she has the opportunity to review a multitude of sources. She has structured an eclectic curricula for the children's use though she does use the Saxon Mathematics program for instruction. There is much sharing of resources among the families in the association also. Exclusive of the three morning subjects where there is much parent/student interaction, most of the instruction is student driven. An example is with the older daughter who is an avid history buff. She spends many afternoons immersed in reading historical biographies.

In respect to technology, it is everywhere in the home. There are three computers, lap tops and a lap wear computer vest with a stylus and battery pack that her husband brought home from work on an experimental basis. The technology is used for Internet research and as supplemental instruction while one or the other children is receiving individualized instruction. One game in particular, Algeblaster, is used consistently.

This home school parent believes in annual assessment and has taken her children to a local private school to participate in their testing. The testing has been the Stanford 9 and the results have placed all three children in the 90th percentile. The only disagreement she has had with other home schoolers is on this issue. She believes that just to see if she is on track she welcomes the assessment. Most home schoolers do not concur with this idea.

In respect to non-academic activities she and her husband belong to a support group in which they are very active. The children play on a home school soccer league in addition to youth groups through their church and engage with the neighborhood children. The majority of extra curricular activities that the children participate in are through the town recreation league.

This observation differed significantly from the first observation. Technology was a key component of all instruction. The home educator was in touch with all types of available curricula and had some very definite views not only on what should be taught, but also how it should be taught. Additionally, there existed a profound networking system that supported all facets of the home schoolers life.

The third observation was in Monmouth County coded MI-2. This home schooler would be classified as New Age. Everything in this home happens naturally. The children wake up when their body clock tells them to. The learning day starts at that point. For the youngest child that learning period goes for about two hours. For the middle school child, the time allocation is approximately four hours. During this period only the basics are taught: reading, writing, and mathematics. The only

prepackaged program that is used is mathematics and this varies from year to year. The yard has an open area with a pond. This area is transformed to approximate geographical areas that are being studied. It has been a desert, the Red Sea, and used as an aquarium when fish and water life are being studied.

This home schooler views herself as a record keeper. She gathers curriculum and provides materials, but once the children are independent, about nine, they are left to their own pace to learn. The only process that is atypical of new agers is that she administers the IOWA test to her children. Her son has tested at the post high school level for the last two years.

Technology is infused into everything the children do. There are four computers in the home and a fax machine. The children have their own email accounts which they use to chat with other home schoolers all over country. The parents belong to a number of home school e-mail loops, but they primarily download software for the children and search out web links that they e-mail to the children.

The primary activity that the children participate in that is non-academic is life. They simply play. They play by themselves (with Legos), and with the neighborhood kids. Their more organized activities include gymnastics, scouts, and Sunday school. For this family there is no designated area to school; it is their lifestyle.

This parent, as well as the children, had many interesting views on what should happen in schools to improve the quality of education for all children. While it is something I will discuss in chapter five it does bear mentioning here. It is the belief

of this family that a teacher should follow her class throughout the elementary years within the scope of certification. To a minor extent this concept is employed via looping. Everyone thought that was a revolutionary concept when it was first introduced. These home school parents believe that following children through their educational history would not only give a teacher a complete profile of the children and how they learn, but also it would allow for more teachable moments because the teacher would always know that what was needed to be covered would eventually be covered because there would be no time constraints to complete a yearly prescribed curriculum.

The entire atmosphere was charged in this environment. There were as many questions (and suggestions) for me and how I might use this information, as I was able to discern from my time with them. The learning, the curiosity to seek information was always present.

The fourth observation/interview was in Somerset-coded SO1. The school day starts at 8:00 am precipitated by the prior night's overview of what will take place that day. These home schoolers follow a very traditional day that usually concludes at 3:00 pm. Mostly the sessions are "work at" sessions. The children follow a very classical education of mathematics, science, Latin, French, literature and the arts. The day dictates the amount of time spent on each of those subjects. The learning is directed by the moment.

Assessment is performance based with no formal assessment tool used. Technology is used very minimally, though the expectation is that as the children

move through their academic career they will use it more. No Internet was employed nor is there an intent to use it.

These home schoolers participate in town recreation leagues such as soccer, wrestling and baseball. Winters are left to travel so there are no activities scheduled with the exception of private fencing lessons. Other activities include 4H groups and a home schoolers support groups.

Their belief is that this question is very ironic because it is their conviction that 1) traditionally educated children, especially in the upper elementary years, tend to engage in negative socialization like taunting and 2) traditionally educated children do not participate in half of the non-academic activities that home schoolers participate in.

These parents have made a significant commitment to home schooling their children. They have altered their life styles and have a true passion for what they are doing. One of their children is a special needs child. He may not be able to spell, but he can surely write a story. What I was most amazed by is how the children demonstrated learning. A variety of ways was used, but the end result was always a clear demonstration of learning.

An obvious concern of the parents was for their special needs child. They felt that he would have been lost, had he stayed in the system. As I have gone through a series of educational experiences in my career, I am inclined to agree. When a child does not do well, we ask for that child to repeat the grade. If the child did not learn the information the first time through, what makes us think that repeating the information

for a second time in the same way will produce a different result. A different approach must be taken and home schooling allows for that.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research was a qualitative study of Central New Jersey home schooling as a reform movement. Home schooling is arguably the first form of schooling though a resurgence occurred in the late sixties and again in the nineties. There is considerable controversy as to the number of home schoolers. When the government does the calculations they tend to underestimate the number (approximately 600,000 Lines (1996) and when the Home School Association does the figuring they tend to overestimate the number (1.23 million in 1997). New Jersey's statistics are no better. In 1997, the Department of Education estimated the home schoolers in New Jersey at 2000. In 2000, when the DOE resurveyed districts that number almost doubled. The *Unschoolers Network*, the newsletter of homeschoolers in New Jersey, has a subscription list of over 6,000. Not that this number necessarily represents the number of children who home school because some are former home schoolers, some are supporters of the movement, and some have multiple children that are being home schooled.

The father of home schooling is John Holt, who through his books such as *How*

Children Learn (1967) and *How Children Fail* (1964) supported the idea of the unschooling of children. The body of his work, written in the 70's gave true impetus to the home school movement. In addition to Holt, the principle researchers in the field are Lines, a former Department of Education employee, Zirkle, a professor at Lehigh University who has studied the legal aspect of home schooling and Knowles and Mayberry, two independent researchers from major universities.

The general profile garnered from this research shows that while many home schoolers made the choice initially because of religious reasons, the more recent home schoolers are opting out of traditional schools because they are dissatisfied with the academic environment. The time spent on instruction averages three to four hours per day. While many parents opt for a prepackaged curriculum, the majority chooses an eclectic approach. The issue of socialization is compensated for by student involvement in town recreation leagues, dance and music lessons, and church groups.

Studies have been done nationwide on every aspect of home schooling though the feature that gets the most attention is the academic results. In all studies, home schoolers have at the very least scored on par with traditional public school students and usually in the upper stanines and at least the 80th percentile.

Perhaps the greatest impact on home schooling has been the infusion of technology. Computer access has provided research tools, educational games, parental support, and most significantly, on line courses to fill in the learning gaps as students progress to more difficult courses and parents feel ill equipped to handle the scope of instruction.

Possibly the area that has made the least progress is the relationship with the zoned school. Though the field of home schooling may be growing in numbers annually, it is still an area that many educators view not only with contempt, but also with trepidation. It seems that every wave of innovation in education, home schooling, vouchers, charter schools is met with skepticism. Nothing can be done as well as in the past and anything that is new appears suspect. How paradoxical in a field that provides on going professional development in the field of learning styles, and still continues to be driven by the status quo and paper and pencil assessments.

Case law abounds in the home school area. Some stretching back to 1924 in *Pierce versus the Society of Sisters* through *Perchemlides versus Frizzle* in 1977 to New Jersey's own *State versus Mazza* in 1967. After years of litigation where home school families held a win ratio of over 95%, home schooling is legal in all fifty states in the year 2001. Parents' personal liberties as guaranteed in the 9th and 14th amendment became the basis for home schoolers to flourish without intrusion by the state or local districts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish a profile of home schoolers in Central New Jersey and to assess home schooling's function as a school reform model.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have spent time focusing on an analysis of what is wrong with public

education in America. Very little research exists on what the learner conceptualizes as the best way to learn. Home schooling takes the lead from the learner and structures study to address identified interests. Traditional education could take a page from this approach.

Research Questions

Eighty-five Superintendents from Central New Jersey responded to the following seven research questions:

1. Do you have identified students in your district who are being home schooled?

Eighty-eight percent of the superintendents responded yes to this question.

2. If so, What is the number?

Out of the 43 superintendents who responded that they did have home schoolers in their district a total of 408 children were identified.

3. Does your Board have a policy on home school students? If so, could you include it in the return envelope?

Eighty percent of the Superintendents responded that their districts did not have a policy on home schooling.

4. Does the Board provide any support or engage in any communication with the parents?

Sixty-seven percent of the districts do not engage in any communication with the parents.

5. Do the children partake in any public school activities i.e. band, sports?

Eighty-eight percent of the Superintendents responded no to this question.

6. What do you perceive to be the greatest benefit for students who are home schooled?

Forty-six percent of the superintendents saw no benefit to home schooling while 19% believed that individual attention was a benefit and another 19% felt that the benefit was bonding with the parents.

7. What do you perceive to be the greatest detriment for student who are home schooled?

Sixty-seven percent of the responses indicated that the greatest detriment to home schooling was a lack of socialization. An additional 26% felt that a lack of quality instruction was the greatest detriment.

8. Please place a check next to all items you believe to be key in a Whole School Reform Model. Please feel free to add any items you feel are missing.

Parental involvement and small classes were the most frequently identified components in a Whole School Reform model.

Additionally, 212 home schoolers in Central New Jersey responded to the following questions.

1. For what reason(s) did you elect to home school?

Of the 212 parents who responded to the survey, 30% of the parents chose to home school because they did not like what they saw in the public schools. Additionally, 13% chose to home school because they wanted to maintain an intimate relationship with their children and yet another 13% chose to home school for religious reasons.

Other responses included the age requirements to start school, the children requested it, and the child's freedom to learn.

2. How long have you home schooled?

Thirty-five percent of the respondents had been home schooling for one year or less, 28% of respondents had been home schooling between two to five years, and 37% had been home schooling over five years.

3. What type of curriculum do you use to home school your children?

An eclectic curriculum is used by 50% of the home schoolers while 17% use Calvert's pre-packaged program. The remaining home schoolers use pre-packaged programs such as Oak Meadows, University of Nebraska, Bob Jones, and Living is Learning.

4. Have you ever employed an assessment to evaluate your child's growth?

The majority of home schoolers (59%) do not employ an assessment tool for their children. Of the 41% who do employ an assessment tool, the assessment of choice is Stanford 9, the Iowa Test, and the California. Of the 41% who test their children 100% of those children have scored above the 80th percentile.

5. Do you have a PC? If so, how is it used in your home school program?

Ninety-three percent of the home school parents have PCs. Use of the PC was fairly evenly split with 29% using them for learning games and enrichment, 28% using them for research, and 15% for word processing. Twenty percent of those with PCs did not use them in the education of their children.

6. In what non-academic activities does your child participate?

Ninety-five percent of the home-schooled children participated in non-academic activities. Of this 95%, 23% participate in competitive sports such as soccer, football, and basketball, 12% in dance, 11% in scouting, 10% in swimming, 8% in music, 7% in art, 7% in church groups with the remaining 22% in activities such as gymnastics, crafts, and horseback riding.

7. Do you utilize any of the services from your local public school?

Only 14% of home schoolers utilize public school services which include borrowing text and curriculum and obtaining the New Jersey Core Content Standards.

8. What do you see as the advantages to home schooling?

Home schoolers saw a variety of advantages to home schooling such as intimacy with the children (23%); the child's option to explore (11%); family harmony (11%); the child's ability to learn at his own pace (9%); the opportunity to cover more information and go into greater depth (9%); and the absence of peer pressure (9%).

9. What do you see as the disadvantages to home schooling?

In respect to the disadvantages parents named lack of socialization (28%); society's perception (20%); demands on time (13%); and expense (9%). Eleven percent of the parents found no disadvantage to home schooling.

Further demographic information was gleaned through the following questions:

1. Age of primary person providing home schooling.

These results approximate the Bell Curve with 2% of the parents between 20-25 years of age and 2% between 56-60. The majority of the parents are between 31-35 (17%);

36-40 (19%); 41-45 (21%) and 46-50 (28%).

2. Gender of person providing the majority of home schooling.

Ninety-four percent of the home school providers are female.

3. Educational background of the person providing the home schooling.

These results are also consistent with the generally accepted statistical distribution.

Those who did not finish high school and those with a doctorate represent 2% and 4% respectively. High school graduates made up 3% of the population, those with some college 39% of the population, college graduates 35% of the population and those with graduate school credentials 17%.

4. Occupation prior to home schooling.

The majority (36%) of those providing home schooling held occupations other than those specified in the survey. Of the occupations identified 15% were teachers, 17% worked in the business world, 4% in retail, 13% secretarial, 4% in the computer technology field, and 11% in health care.

5. Combined family income.

The combined family income reflect a significant spread with 2% in the \$15,000-\$20,000, 21,000-25,000, and \$31,000-\$40,000 range. Another 9% of the families listed the \$26,000-\$30,000 range while the remainder fell into the \$41,000-\$50,000 range (14%); \$51,000-\$60,000 (23%); \$61,000-\$70,000 (7%); \$71,000-\$80,000 (7%); \$81,000-\$90,000 (11%); \$91,000-\$100,000 (7%); \$101,000-\$110,000 (5%); and \$111,000+(11%).

Description of the Sample

The survey sample was taken from Central New Jersey: the counties of Middlesex, Monmouth, Union, Somerset. Using the County Superintendent's Office as a resource, a list of the 85 superintendents in the four counties was obtained and the surveys mailed for anonymous response. Of the 85 surveys sent, responses were received from 49 superintendents representing 58% of the population.

The home schoolers population was obtained from the mailing list of *Unschoolers Network*, the New Jersey home school newsletter. Of the 550 surveys that were sent out for anonymous return, 212 viable surveys were sent back representing 40% of the home school population.

Methods of Research

Triangulation was the methodology employed to assess the data in this qualitative study. Utilizing surveys, observations, interviews and a review of the home school case law to date it was possible to draw significant conclusions and noteworthy recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Findings

The results of the surveys and observations show there is more common ground than was first anticipated. In addition to the common ground, implications for improvement of education within and without of formalized school reform

movements and indications that further study will reap even more beneficial data are evident.

Conjoining the responses of the superintendents and the home schoolers, we find that where socialization was named as a disadvantage of home schooling by superintendents, 95% of the home schoolers surveyed had their children in at least one non-academic activity. More interestingly, the items that superintendents checked as being crucial to school reform movements were a basic part of the home school program.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from this research.

1. The perceived disadvantage to home schooling-lack of socialization is a non-issue. Home schoolers engage in ample extra curricular activities (95% participate in at least one outside activity) that make for a well-rounded child.
2. Items identified by superintendents as integral to a school reform movement are part of the home school program in 90% of the areas (small classes, parent involvement).
3. Home schooling is as much of a school reform movement as Success for All, vouchers and charter schools. When Congress passed the CSRD (Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration) program in 1998 they established certain characteristics needed in

school reform models in order to get Congressional funding.

Among the characteristics are: promote high standards for all children, address all academic subject areas and grade levels, align all resources across grades and subject areas, and facilitate parent and community involvement. Home schooling meets those criteria and more. Further, given the number of home schoolers estimated, even at the Home School Association's figure it is not a threat to public schools nor a competition. It is simply a choice.

4. Though home schooling is legal in all 50 states, the preponderance of participants still chooses to remain anonymous. This emanates from past experiences when school systems either filed suit or tried to control what was being taught or further, when well meaning neighbors called DYFS (Division of Youth and Family Services) because they felt that the home-schooled children were being neglected.
5. The demographic results of Central New Jersey Home Schoolers are consistent with what is known about home schoolers nationally. That is the average age is 35-45, the mother is the primary instructor, most home schoolers have at least some college with a significant number being college graduates, and family income ranges between \$40,000 and \$70,000. The research of Gustavson (1987) and Wagenaar (1997) is most

reflective with consideration given to inflation when comparing annual incomes.

6. Growing dissatisfaction with the quality of public education is the primary reason Central New Jerseyans home school. As long as that opinion holds parents will continue to look for alternative educational choices. Researchers such as Konnert and Wendel (1988), Anderson (1991), and Cloud and Morse (2001) were among the first to uncover reasons other than religious for home schooling.
7. Standardized test results for Central New Jersey home schoolers are reflective of home schoolers nationally. That is they average in the 80th percentile or above in both reading and mathematics. This data affirms the findings of Falle (1986), Duval et al (1997) and Golden (2000).
8. The use of technology has given greater impetus to the home schooling movement. It has allowed parents to network with other home schoolers and has opened up educational opportunities for high school students via on line courses. Doyle's research (1992) is supported by the survey data that demonstrates that 70 % of home schoolers utilize computers as a teaching tool.
9. The concept of home schooling presents a paradox. While direct instruction generally never exceeds four hours allowing for

additional exposure to practical applications of knowledge i.e. the zoo and the museum, home schoolers would tell you that it is a life style and learning is on-going.

10. Much of what is done in home schooling is applicable to traditional education if only on a smaller scale i. e. looping.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Forge a partnership with a public school to pilot the home school looping for at least four grades instead of two to assess the social, emotional, and academic impact on children.
2. Quantify the results of assessing students based on their learning styles rather than the standard pen and paper test.
3. Investigate the proliferation of charter schools and the impact they have had on the home school movement.
4. Study the effect of a reduced school day rather than the elongated day, but with fewer children. Utilizing the traditional half day schedule of kindergarten devote only a three hour schedule to direct instruction, but to only half of the class. The remainder of the school day could be devoted to community service, field trips, hands on activities, or creative/thematic projects. The other half of the class would follow the reverse schedule.
5. Investigate the demographic data as it relates to minority

participation in home schooling. Is there a significant representation? Are the reasons for minority participation the same or different for home schooling than their non minority counterparts? Are there any unique challenges that exist for minority home schoolers?

6. Explore further the reasons for the high achievement in standardized scores on the part of home schoolers. Is it the methodology employed? Curricula? Or the innate ability of the group tested?
7. Consider the impact of the child centered approach in home schooling? What can be extrapolated to mainstream education? Should an IEP (individualized educational plan) be written for every child who enters an American school?
8. Examine home school curricula and how it relates to state and national standards. Are pre-packaged curricula such as Calvert and Oak Meadows more inclined to conform to state and national standards or is the eclectic approach just as likely to follow standards. Perhaps neither is standards based. In that case what does that tell us?

Recommendations for Home Schooling

1. The perceived issue on the part of home schoolers that

socialization is a detriment is not borne out by the research.

Perhaps the socialization is an issue for the parents. Continued networking with home schoolers within and without of the state should ameliorate that.

2. Home schooling has much to offer traditional public education and public schools possess many of the resources that could assist you in instructing your child. Forging a positive relationship with the schools whenever possible would be beneficial to you and helpful in dispelling the negative perception some administrators have toward home schoolers.
3. Whether through the Home Schooling Legal Defense League or independently, the home school movement needs to maintain its lobbying efforts. Students who are home schooled comprise a larger number of students than those students who attend charter schools and have received vouchers combined. The rights and access to educational opportunities must be guaranteed to all students regardless of how they are educated.
4. With the proliferation of charter schools, it may be worth looking into the possibility of starting a home school charter school or virtual school. In this way per student funds would be available to you to defray some of the costs of home schooling.

These are only a few of the avenues that the research opens up. The important

thing is that no educational pursuit is without merit in some aspect. We must always maintain an open mind on how best children learn. The common denominator is respect. We cannot purport to celebrate diversity on a personal level, but condemn it on a professional level.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Veronica DeNoia
474 South Pin Oak Place # 104
Longwood, Florida 32779
407-389-1743

Dear _____ (Chief School Administrator),

I am currently a doctoral student at Seton Hall University working under the mentorship of Dr. George Lindemer. Presently, I am writing my dissertation which is titled A Qualitative Study of Central Jersey Home Schooling as a Reform Movement.

I have worked in the field of public school education for over twenty-five years. During that time I have been involved with a number of school reform movements. Some have been promising; others have not. I am continually looking for avenues of improvement to explore. I believe the arena of home schooling may provide some insight. The purpose of this study is to investigate Central Jersey home schooling and explore the techniques that are used in delivery of instruction to determine which of the procedures could be applied in a public school setting to improve academic performance.

I am requesting your anonymous participation in this study by completing the survey on the reverse side of this letter and returning it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. This is completely voluntary and confidentiality of response is assured. Completion and return of the survey indicate that the subject understood the project and agreed to participate in it.

Results will be available in the aggregate in approximately three months. Should you wish to receive a copy please let me know by either writing me at the address listed above or phoning me at the number listed above.

Please note that this proposal has been reviewed and approved by Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number is (973) 275-2974.

Thank you in anticipation of your participation. Should you need clarification of any item on the survey, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number listed above.

Very truly yours,

Veronica DeNoia

APPENDIX B
SUPERINTENDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

SUPERINTENDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you have identified students in your district who are being home schooled?
2. If so, what is the number?
3. Does your Board have a policy on home-schooled students? If so, could you include it in the return envelope?
4. Does the Board provide any support or engage in any communication with the parents?
5. Do the children partake in any public school activities i.e. band, sports?
6. What do you perceive to be the greatest benefit for students who are home schooled?
7. What do you perceive to be the greatest detriment for students who are home schooled?
8. Please place a check next to all items you believe to be key in a Whole School Reform Model. Please feel free to add any items you feel are missing.

Smaller classes
Cross-curricular instruction
Strict discipline codes with severe repercussions
Increased access to technology
Flexible scheduling
Career exposure
Practical learning experiences
Parental involvement
Staff development
Increased budget
Community service experiences

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO HOME SCHOOLERS

Veronica DeNoia
474 South Pin Oak Place # 104
Longwood, Florida 32779
407-389-1743

Dear Home Schoolers:

I am currently a doctoral student at Seton Hall University working under the mentorship of Dr. George Lindemer. Presently, I am writing my dissertation which is titled A Qualitative Study of Central Jersey Home Schooling as a Reform Movement.

I have attended the Bookdale conferences and have met a number of home schoolers. I am more than intrigued by the concept and in awe of the commitment that you make not only to educate your children academically, but also to provide them with other life experiences.

I have been in the field of public education for over twenty-five years and I know that much of what we are doing simply does not work. I believe that public education can learn much from what home schoolers are doing with their children and that is the focus of my study. I want to identify the practices that home schoolers employ that have resulted in above average academic achievement for their children. I hope to extrapolate from that and make suggestions for applications in the public school.

I am requesting your anonymous participation in this study by completing the survey on the reverse side of this letter and returning it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. This is completely voluntary and confidentiality of response is assured. Should you elect to participate in the interview/case study aspect of the research you will be asked to sign a permission slip for your child noting that at any time during the study you may opt out (see attachment).

Please note that this proposal has been reviewed and approved by Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number is (973) 275-2974

Thank you for your participation. It is estimated that fifteen minutes will be required to complete the survey. Should you require clarification of any of the items contained in the survey, do not hesitate to contact me at the number listed above. The results will be available in six months and I will be sharing them in the aggregate with the editor of Unschoolers Network for you to review. Should you want a personal copy, please contact me by mail at the address above or by phone at the number above.

Very truly yours,
Veronica DeNoia

APPENDIX D
HOME SCHOOLERS' SURVEY

HOME SCHOOLERS' SURVEY

1. For what reason(s) did you elect to home school?
2. How long have you been home schooling?
3. What type of curriculum do you use to home school your children?
4. Have you ever employed an assessment to evaluate your child's growth?
 - a) If so, what instrument was employed?
 - b) What were the results?
 - c) How were the results utilized?
5. Do you have a PC? If so how is it used in your home school program?
6. In what non-academic activities does your child participate?
7. Do you utilize any of the services from your local public school?
 - a) If so, which ones?
 - b) Includes any dialogue that you may have with school administrators.
8. What do you see as the advantages to home schooling?
9. What do you see as the disadvantages to home schooling?
10. Would you be willing to have your family participate as part of the case study phase? This would entail three two-hour observation sessions over the course of three months—confidentiality assured {see enclosed permission slip}.

For demographic purposes, please answer the following:

Age of primary person providing the home schooling:(Place a check next to the correct answer)

20-25 _____

31-35 _____

41-45 _____

26-30 _____

36-40 _____

46-50 _____

Gender of the person providing the majority of the home schooling:

Male _____

Female _____

Educational background of the person providing the home schooling:

High school (did not graduate) _____

Some college _____

Graduate school _____

High school graduate _____

College Graduate _____

Doctorate _____

Occupation prior to home schooling:

Teacher _____

Retail _____

Computer Technology _____

Health Care _____

Business _____

Secretarial _____

Communications _____

Other _____

Combined Family Income:

\$25,000-\$30,000 _____

\$41,000-\$50,000 _____

\$61,000-\$70,000 _____

\$81,000-\$90,000 _____

\$101,000-\$110,000 _____

\$31,000-\$40,000 _____

\$51,000-\$60,000 _____

\$71,000-\$80,000 _____

\$91,000-\$100,000 _____

\$ 111,000 + _____

APPENDIX E
OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

During the observation period the following procedures will be recorded.

1. Researcher's description of the educational setting.
2. What are the established procedures?
3. What are the subjects taught?
4. What time is spent on each subject?
5. Is there a single focus to learning or is it multi-modal?
6. What role if any does technology play in instruction?
7. How much interaction is there between teacher and student?
8. How much of the learning is student directed?
9. How is assessment determined?
10. What provision is made for participation in non-academic activities?
11. What educational documents, if any, were collected.
12. Other Comments:

APPENDIX F
INFORMED CONSENT (PARENTS)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This research project is entitled A Qualitative Study of Home Schooling in Central NJ as a School Reform Movement. During this phase of the research, you are being asked to participate in a case study. This will entail three two-hour sessions where the researcher will observe your daily routine of home schooling. The purpose of this observation is to glean techniques that are effective in delivery of instruction that may be applicable to a public school setting.

There are no risks to participation and all information gathered will be coded for purposes of anonymity and confidentiality. Results will be available in approximately three months and will be presented through the newsletter Unschoolers Network or can be sent to you personally should you so request.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is 973-275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

I, _____ give permission for my child(ren) to participate in the case study phase of this project. I understand that total confidentiality will be maintained during this project and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. The scope of this participation will be observational only.

Subject or Authorized Representative

Date

APPENDIX G
INFORMED CONSENT FORM (11-18)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(Subject's ages 11-18)

This research project is entitled A Qualitative Study of Central Jersey Home Schooling as a Reform Movement. During this phase of the research, you are being asked to participate in a case study. This will entail three two-hour sessions where the researcher will observe your daily routine of home schooling. The purpose of this observation is to glean techniques that are effective in delivery of instruction that may be applicable to a public school setting.

There are no risks to participation and all information gathered will be coded for purposes of anonymity and confidentiality. Results will be available in approximately three months and will be presented through the newsletter Unschoolers Network or can be sent to you personally should you so request.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is 973-275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

I, _____ agree to participate in the case study phase of this project. I understand that total confidentiality will be maintained during this project and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. The scope of this participation will be observational only.

Subject's Signature

Date

APPENDIX H
INFORMED CONSENT (5-10)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(Subject's Form Ages 5-10)

This research project is entitled A Qualitative Study of Central Jersey Home Schooling as a Reform Movement. During this phase of the research, you are being asked to participate in a case study. This will entail three two-hour sessions where the researcher will observe your daily routine of home schooling. The purpose of this observation is to glean techniques that are effective in delivery of instruction that may be applicable to a public school setting.

There are no risks to participation and all information gathered will be coded for purposes of anonymity and confidentiality. Results will be available in approximately three months and will be presented through the newsletter Unschoolers Network or can be sent to you personally should you so request.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is 973-275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

I, _____ agree to have Ms. DeNoia observe me while I am going to school at home to see what I do during my day.

I understand no one will know who I am or what I am doing. I can stop at any time.

Subject

Date